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ECUMENICAL STUDIES IN WORSHIP

No. 4

JACOB'S LADDER

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

by

WILLIAM NICHOLLS

Chaplain to Anglican Students in Edinburgh



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ECUMENICAL STUDIES IN WORSHIP

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And [Jacob] dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. (Genesis 28: 12.)

And [Jesus] saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. (John 1: 51.)

PREFACE

THE STUDIES IN worship of which the present book is the outcome were begun in the years 1949 to 1951, when I was working as a Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation. I was charged, among other things, with the preparation of a Federation "Grey Book" on worship in an ecumenical movement of students. Like all such Grey Books, the one which I wrote was not merely a personal production. It was intended to incorporate the long experience of the Federation in many different countries and ecumenical situations, and to that end the first draft of my work was circulated among a wide group of theologians and student leaders in a number of different parts of the world. It need not be said that I learned a great deal in the process. The Grey Book was published in mimeographed form at the end of 1950 under the title of *Worship in the Ecumenical Movement*, and is now no longer available. It attracted a certain amount of attention from theologians interested in ecumenical questions, as well as among the students and leaders for whom it was primarily intended, and may perhaps have come into the hands of some readers of the present book.

When the Editors of this series asked me to write a book for them on "The essence of worship", one of the purposes they had in mind, I believe, was by this means to make available to a wider audience the findings of the W.S.C.F., as represented by my Grey Book. I was encouraged to draw freely upon the theological sections of the former book, while the practical sections were to be taken up into a pamphlet being prepared at the same time for the British Council of Churches. In the event, however, my self-plagiarism has turned out to be far smaller than I had expected, or perhaps than was expected of me. What seemed to be of value in the Grey Book was the systematic relating of ways of worship in different churches and traditions to doctrines of the continuity of the Church held in these traditions. The thesis of the book was that differences in ways of worship are the result of different doctrines of the Church. This thesis represented an approach characteristic of the work of the theological side of the ecumenical movement at that time, in that while it sought to probe beneath the surface of

church divisions to their theological roots, it remained in the sphere of "comparative ecclesiology".

The present work not unnaturally reflects the further development of the theological work of Faith and Order since Lund, 1952. As most readers will know, the significant advance made at the Lund Conference, which has governed the main work of Faith and Order since then, was the discovery that there is a further way of seeking unity, more profound and far-reaching than "comparative ecclesiology", in which we start from the christological pattern given in Scripture and affirmed in all our traditions, and learn together how it will correct and unify all our doctrines and the life of our churches. Evidently worship is a particularly fruitful field for such an approach, and so the present work, while incorporating the insights of my Grey Book, sets out to develop a doctrine of worship upon christological foundations, and reaches an analysis of different worshipping traditions only as the outcome of that. In conjunction with the new christological approach, I have taken into account other studies of my own in the field of revelation, and the doctrine of the Word of God.

Thus *Jacob's Ladder* is substantially a new work, and represents a stage beyond its predecessor, certainly in my own understanding of these problems, and in so far as it forms part of a wider movement of thought, in the work of Faith and Order also. It is offered, to any who found value in the former work, as a report of a further development in thought about the same problems, and also as a contribution to the work now going on in the field of Faith and Order on the basis of the insights of Lund. It thus both reflects, and is intended as a contribution towards, the work of the Theological Commission for Europe on *Christ and the Church*, of which I am now a member; and is also offered, as a contribution arising out of the thinking of that Commission, to the sister Commission on *Ways of Worship*.

It may be hoped, however, that the subject of this book will be of much wider interest than the perhaps somewhat technical, though not for that reason less important, studies on which it has been able to draw. I have tried always to keep in mind the far broader worshipping community of the Holy Catholic Church herself, to whose practice in worship, in the offering of thanksgiving and adoration of the Blessed Trinity through Jesus Christ our Lord, all theological study is in the last resort directed. No writer on worship could be content unless he were able to believe that his work assisted, however remotely, that supremely important activity of the Church of which he is a member,

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and any evidence that he has been of service in this way will be his best reward.

My thanks are due to all who helped me in the earlier study, to my colleagues in the Commission on *Christ and the Church*, to whom I owe much that is of central importance in the thesis of this book, and to the Editors of this series for patient kindness and the correction of many blemishes in execution.

Edinburgh, July 1958

WILLIAM NICHOLLS.

I

THEOLOGY AND WAYS OF WORSHIP

WORSHIP IS THE supreme and only indispensable activity of the Christian Church: It alone will endure, like the love for God which it expresses, into heaven, when all other activities of the Church will have passed away. It must therefore, even more strictly than any of the less essential doings of the Church, come under the criticism and control of the revelation on which the Church is founded. An enquiry into the meaning, or essence, of worship will necessarily be a theological one, though it will necessarily also have to take into account the ways in which Christians actually worship God in their different traditions to-day, and have done so in the past. Our study will have to make reference both to liturgical history, and also to the comparative study of worship which the ecumenical movement has brought into being; but it would be a great mistake to suppose that in the last resort we could read off the answer to our question from the analysis of worship as an empirical fact.

If we grant the principle, *legem credendi statuat lex supplicandi*, this is not to admit that anything which may creep into the devotional tradition of the Church necessarily becomes a divine revelation of the true faith. On the contrary, the tradition of Christian worship is subject, like all other human activities, to corruption, and stands in need of reform and purification from time to time. But the liturgy has within itself the seeds of its own reform, in a way that perhaps nothing else in the Church has. For it is in the liturgy supremely that the tradition of the one revelation in Christ is handed on. As God draws His people to Himself in word and sacrament, He continually renews in them the knowledge of Himself which He has given in Christ. Nor is this knowledge to be thought of, here at least, in any abstract or theoretical way. The foundation of Christian worship is the presence of God with His people. The words and actions by which He makes Himself known to them, and by which they express in their answering worship the knowledge of Him which He has given them, are charged with the divine life. The liturgy, unless it is allowed to petrify at one epoch or another,

is plastic to the revealing presence of God. Thus the theological endeavours of the Church will be based on the best and surest foundations if those who take part in them feed their minds constantly at the liturgy. The doctrines of the Church will bear on reality if they are never divorced from her worshipping life.

Conversely, however, the form and expression of the liturgy itself, at any given time, must be subject to the criticism of theology. If theology takes its beginning from faithful waiting upon God in word and sacrament, the rites by which we celebrate the liturgy need constantly to be re-aligned to their purpose and end by the discipline of a theology grounded in revelation. The reform of worship, which is a ceaseless task of the Church, is necessary because the human side of worship is subject to change and decay. If its essence does not alter, its expression is never final. An ordering of worship which was once obedient to the Word may cease to be so, as the meaning of words and the significance of symbols change along with changes in the culture of the men who worship by it. And since, in the most conservative of liturgical traditions, changes do in any case take place from time to time, it must be the task of theology to scrutinize the changes that are taking place in response to pastoral or evangelistic needs, to ensure that they do not drag away the liturgy from its anchoring in the one revelation.

Thus the answer to the question which we are asking will be a theological one, as our enquiry will be theological, though in neither case can our theological work be divorced from the practice of worship. This would be true even if the worshipping tradition of the Church had flowed on undivided, from its source in the Upper Room on the night of our Lord's betrayal. But we all know that that is not the case. The history of the liturgy, as well as theological presupposition, give us ground for thinking that in the Church of patristic times, whatever the variations in usage and custom from one church to another, the liturgy was essentially one thing everywhere. But it is more doubtful if the same can be said, once the process of Christian division had begun. There are already characteristic differentiations to be observed in the liturgical expression of the Orthodox East and the Catholic West, and the Reformation initiated far more striking changes, not only in the practice of worship, but also in the theological understanding men held of it. Whether these changes were for the enrichment or the impoverishment of the Church's understanding of her worshipping activity is not now in question; but we can hardly

arrive at even the most provisional answer to our question without dealing with the theological questions which were then adumbrated.

The contemporary ecumenical movement leads us to doubt if any of the answers which our divided traditions have given can be accounted final. All ecumenical thinking about worship so far has proceeded upon the assumption that we can expect as a fruit of reunion some mutual enrichment in worship; and as the ecumenical movement turns, as Faith and Order, through its various commissions, is now doing, to a more profoundly theological approach to our divisions, we can expect to find all our traditions subjected increasingly to the criticism of the tradition of the early Church, and so ultimately to that of the christological pattern itself. Our study is accordingly relevant not only to contemporary attempts at the reform of worship in practice, such as are going on in so many churches today, but also to the great problem of Christian reunion, in which the subject of worship plays a more important part than is generally supposed.

Indeed, if our contentions so far are true, ways of worship can hardly be relegated, as has so often been the case in proposals for reunion, to the level of "non-theological factors", those psychological and social forces which impede or facilitate reunion, without themselves entering into the substance of Christian unity. If ways of worship are theologically determined, and indeed ought to be so, then differences in worship are differences in faith, and unity of faith demands unity of worship, at least in what is of the essence of worship. Indeed, we may go further, and say that Christian unity in fact is nothing else than true unity in worship. If we have that, we have what ultimately matters. If we are one in the presence of God, one in receiving His gift of Himself in word and sacrament, one in our understanding of what He gives, and one in our responsive praise of His holy Name, then we are one Church. For it is just in order to be one in this way that we seek to resolve our theological differences and our differences about the ministry. Only when these questions are brought into the presence of God in worship can we see what they really mean, and how much our differences matter. Nothing can be more mistaken than to suppose that we have only to solve a few theological problems and find a formula for uniting our ministries, and then we can live happily together while leaving our ways of worship untouched. It is commonly said that for the laity the differences in worship are all-important. The laity are right. They have the heart of the matter in them, though they may at times fail to see the relevance to worship of our more obviously theological concerns.

It follows that to embark upon a study of the meaning, or essence, of worship is to embark upon a quest for the substance of Christian unity. That at once humbles our pretensions, and points to the preliminary nature of anything we may find. But it also shows the value of any study, however inadequate, of such a question. So far-reaching are its implications that many books would be needed to work them out in all the departments of the Church's life upon which they bear, even if agreement had once been reached at the central point. We cannot pretend even to sketch them here. We shall be content if we have managed to establish a method of working, and to find a point at which the central concerns of the different traditions with which we are acquainted can be creatively related to each other. We may say at once that it is our conviction that that point lies in Christology; or, to put it more concretely, the foundation of Christian worship is our Lord Himself, as the One who is both the divine Word and man's perfect response to that Word. If we make it our endeavour, as we think of the different aspects of worship, to recognize His work, we shall find the essence of worship, as well as the true concern of the different traditions, and also the unity which our divisions obscure, along with the means of correcting the distortion and impoverishment of the fullness of Christian worship which they bring about.

Thus our aim will be to relate worship at every point to the revelation and redemption which God brought about in Christ, and to show how He is the *Jacob's Ladder* upon which passes all that traffic of God to man and man to God which is the meaning of our worship. In doing this we shall seek to survey incidentally the different Christian traditions of worship, and to give such account of them as their adherents may recognize as sympathetic and fair, though not uncritical. But our aim will not be to give any exhaustive comparative study of these traditions. The limits of a short study preclude that, and in any case readers may go both to the publications of individual theologians, and to the excellent comparative volumes which have been produced by the World Council of Churches. We shall take what we need from such sources, and from what we have learned from participation in worship, both in our own and in other traditions. But our primary aim is not to compare, or even to synthesize, if such a thing were possible, these traditions. We wish rather to explore the fruitfulness of our Christological starting point when we apply it to all the different aspects of worship, and to see how by its means they can be drawn together into

a whole which by its self-consistent unity may impress itself upon our minds as being in fact the essence of Christian worship.

Thus, after a selective survey of the biblical background to our subject, we shall turn to consider three main aspects of worship which have each been most fully explored in a different tradition, the place in worship of the Word, the Sacrament, and the Holy Spirit. The consideration of these central theological themes will also introduce some reference to many aspects of the practice of worship. Finally, we shall turn to consider rapidly the ecumenical implications of our christological approach, and end with some conclusions about the worship to which we may look forward in a united Church.

II

THE WORSHIP OF THE REDEEMED

Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed. (Ps. 107: 2a.
P.B.V.)

OUR SEARCH FOR the meaning of worship may begin with an examination of words. "Worship", as most people know, is "worth-ship". To give worship to anyone is to accord them due recognition of their inherent dignity and value, of their worth or worthiness. In the English of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, as of civic ceremonial, this sense of the word is preserved. If we worship God, we may also address a magistrate or a mayor as "Your worship", and a man may promise, in the marriage service, to worship his wife with his body. English, which is not always rich in theological terminology, has the advantage over many other languages in possessing this word, which covers the whole field of our response to God, and yet, through its derivation, focuses that response on our recognition of the majesty of God. It is not easy, indeed, to find an exact translation of the word into French or German. The French for "worship" is *le culte*, but the French term has not the capacity of the English one to turn itself into a verb, whose subject may as easily be the individual as the Church. Thus it is probably impossible to translate "worshipper" into French, at least without some elaborate circumlocution. While the French term, with its origins in the Latin *cultus*, covers much of the same area of association, but suggests to the etymologically sensitive a pagan notion of worship, the German *Gottesdienst* is an evidently Christian and biblical term, but narrower in meaning than its English counterpart. Moreover, the German term is closer to the English "service", and, like it, can be used for a single occasion of worship. Again, however, it is not so easy to speak in German of the worship of the individual. *Gottesdienst* suggests public, not private, worship.

If we wish to think of the worship which the individual offers to God, whether as a particular participant in the corporate worship of the Church, or by himself in the secrecy of his own room, we shall

turn more naturally to the word "prayer", which does have direct equivalents in *prière* and *Gebet*, with their corresponding verbs. The etymology of these words, in all three languages, is less helpful than that of the word "worship" in disclosing the meaning of what we do when we engage in these activities; for all of them mean simply to make a request to a person in a position to grant it. While we should be most unwise to deny the place of petition in Christian prayer and worship, we should certainly be impoverishing our conception of it greatly if we allowed petition to be the exclusive or even the dominant sense of these words, as we use them now, filled with the sense which the worshipping tradition of the Church has given to them. That usage tells us that when a Christian prays, he is holding communion with the God who is holy love; his prayer is coloured by adoration and thanksgiving, and is a communion with God transcending any of the elements into which it can be analysed. The same shift in meaning from petition to disinterested worship can be observed in the German *Anbetung*, which has taken over the sense of the Latin, French and English "adoration". But "worship" held that meaning from the first, and it remains, for those who speak English, the most suitable word for our purpose.

Behind our English word stands the biblical terminology itself. When our Lord rejected the ultimate temptation of the devil, He said: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Here the crucial Greek words are *proskynein* and *latreuein*, the two New Testament words which may be translated "worship". *Proskynein*, here translated "worship", originally referred to the physical action of bowing down, prostrating oneself, before an earthly king. Thus in reference to God it has the connotation of humbling oneself in adoration. It corresponds to *hishtahawah* in the Hebrew Bible, which has the same meaning. *Latreuein*, which came in later theology to be the normal technical word for worship, means to serve, with the service of a hired labourer or slave. Significantly, there lies behind it the Hebrew word '*abodah*, which is the same root as the noun '*ebed*: the Suffering Servant of the Lord, whose part Jesus assumed, is called in Hebrew the '*Ebed Yahweh*. The obedience of the Son of God, as the Suffering Servant of the Lord, is thus precisely the offering of *latreia*, or worship. Thus, *latreia* (as later theology recognized) may not be offered to anyone but God Himself; the word "only" in the passage quoted above from Matt. 4: 10 was inserted by our Lord, and does not stand in the Old Testament original (Deut. 6: 13). Our Lord's

obedience as the Servant of God in resisting the devil's temptation takes the form of guarding jealously for God His right to be worshipped alone, in accordance with the Second Commandment.¹

Thus even the study of the terminology of the Bible soon takes us to Christology, and confronts us with the living figure of Jesus, as the perfect worshipper of God, loyal to His service, His *latreia*, even in the ultimate temptation. When we reach that point, we are at the centre of the biblical understanding of worship; but we shall find that there is much else to say by way of context to that central recognition of Jesus, the Suffering Servant, whose worship takes Him to the Cross.

The biblical view of worship, which governs the actual worship of Jews and Christians, is distinguished from all other religious understandings of the cultus by the fact that the worship of God's people in the Bible is always represented as the worship offered by those who have been redeemed. Thus it would be no paradox to say that for us worship does not start with man, but with God, who has taken the initiative to which we respond when we worship Him. He has made His Name known to us, and so we worship that Name. Indeed, in the Old Testament, the Name of God is not merely His revealed character, which He proclaims to man (cf. Exod. 33: 19; 34: 5ff.), but even in some sense Himself. The Temple is spoken of as the place where God has recorded His Name, or made His Name to be remembered (Exod. 20: 24), and even as the place where God has caused His Name to dwell (Deut. 12: 11). In this context, the Name means the Presence of God with His people. The same strong sense reappears in the New Testament in our Lord's words in John 17: 6: "I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me."²

God manifests His Name to His people in His acts in history, by which He redeems them from their enemies. The Old Testament revelation of the Name of God at the burning bush (Exod. 3: 14) is inseparable from the action of God in redeeming His people from slavery in Egypt. In the same way the revelation of the Name of God in the New Covenant, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, is linked with the ordinance of Baptism, whereby men are taken out of the power of the Prince of this world and taken into the service of God who has redeemed them in Christ. Nor are these isolated texts on which to build a scholar's theory; they sum up a principle that is

¹ cf. J. S. McEwen in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (ed. A. Richardson), 1950, s.v. Worship.

² cf. O. S. Rankin in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, s.v. Name.

central in biblical theology. Worship takes place within the Covenant, and the Covenant is established by God on the basis of His own redemptive acts which He has already performed.

Thus the elaborate ordinances governing the Temple worship in the Old Testament are contained in the books of the Law, which are represented as the prescriptions given by God to His people in the establishment of the Covenant on Mount Sinai through Moses. The Covenant is made with the people *after* they have been brought out of Egypt. True, they are not yet in the Promised Land; there is a pilgrimage to be undergone through the wilderness; but they are already a redeemed community. They worship the One who has made Himself known to them in bringing them out of bondage, and henceforward they will know Him and worship Him as the Lord their God, who has brought them out of the land of Egypt. Moreover, as we have just seen, not only the fact that they worship Him, but even the manner in which they do so, takes its origin, at least as the biblical writers see it, from the revelation on Sinai. The Temple sacrifices are not therefore to be understood in the same sense as the heathen sacrifices, as the propitiation that man offers to an unknown God, for purposes essentially his own. The Jewish sacrifices are acts of obedience, arising out of the Covenant-revelation. In the last resort, they are all sacrifices of thanksgiving to the God who has brought them out of Egypt into the Promised Land. They take the form of response, not of initiative. Whatever criticisms the Christian understanding of worship, taught in part by the Old Testament itself, has to offer of the Old Testament sacrifices, that fundamental fact should never be lost sight of.

Even more strikingly is all this true of the New Testament. The worship of the Church is offered to the God who has visited and redeemed His people in Jesus the Christ. In doing so He has made Himself known to them far more fully than under the Old Covenant, and has given them a new and better redemption. Included in that redemption is the response to it, made once for all on behalf of all humanity by Christ. All Christian worship is made "through Jesus Christ our Lord"; it is a participation in His perfect worship, just as it finds its basis in the revelation that He embodied. Christian worship adds nothing to the worship of Christ, but is entirely included within it. Christ our High Priest is Himself the foundation of the worship that is offered by the Royal Priesthood of the Church.

The New Testament adds to the Shema: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord, is one, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart and all thy mind and all thy strength," an even profounder truth, implicit in the revelation of the Old Covenant but far more clearly displayed in the New: "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4: 10.) Christian worship, as we shall see, is essentially *eucharistia*, thanksgiving, to the God who has given us full and final redemption, and in the same act restored to us our broken relationship with all His creation, whose praise we are called to make articulate (cf. Rev. 5: 13f.). We worship because we have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is consonant with this biblical understanding of worship as man's response to the grace of God that we should find the possibility of our worship to lie in the presence of God with His people. God brought His people out of Egypt and into the wilderness by the presence of His glory, showing Himself as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. His presence continued with the people in their pilgrimage through the wilderness, as the foundation of their national identity and the pledge of God's goodwill (Exod. 33: 14ff.). The gracious presence of God in the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exod. 40: 34ff.) is continued in the Temple. The visible cloud, the symbol of the divine glory that no man can look upon, is now withdrawn, but God is still believed to dwell invisibly between the Cherubim that spread their wings over the mercy-seat on the Ark of the Covenant, behind the veil in the Most Holy Place (1 Kings 8: 10; 2 Chron. 5: 13f., 7: 1ff.; Exod. 25: 21f.). God's presence in the Temple is the heart of Israel's national life; here He will commune with them, and it is before this presence that worship is offered.

In the writings of the Rabbis the presence of God is also thought of in another way, related to but broader than this conception of the presence in the Temple. This is the idea of the *Shekinah*, God's dwelling upon earth. God may cause His *Shekinah* to dwell with men whenever He graciously wills to do so, as He did at the burning bush, but He is specially near in worship and in obedience, as well as in the study of the Law.¹ It may be that this post-exilic idea of the *Shekinah* is to be connected in part with the growth of synagogue worship, founded not on the sacrificial system and the Temple worship, but on the gathering of a few together to read the Law and meditate upon it. In such a devout study of the Law, God is also present. "Two that sit together and are

¹ A. M. Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ*, 1949, pp. 19f.

occupied in the words of the Law have the *Shekinah* among them." Here is a form of worship possible even when the Temple cannot be used, as during the period of exile, or when, as seems to have been thought, the glorious presence which departed at the fall of Jerusalem has not fully returned to the restored Temple; none the less, like the Temple worship, synagogue worship does not take place without its own form of the presence of the Lord.

As Ramsey (*loc. cit.*) points out, though the idea of the *Shekinah* is different in many respects from the biblical idea of the *kabod*, the glory of God, associated with the cloud and the fire, and the presence in the tabernacle, the Septuagint brings the two ideas together. In the Greek of the Septuagint the word *skene* stands for both the tabernacle and the *Shekinah*, just as the word *doxa* stands for the *Shekinah* as well as for the Hebrew *kabod*. In this Septuagintal usage may perhaps lie the background to the language of the prologue of St. John's Gospel, when he says that the Word made flesh *dwelt* among us (*eskenosen en hemin*). By the play on *skene*, *eskenosen*, St. John implies that Christ as the Word made flesh was the true *Shekinah*, the true presence of God with men. L. Bouyer¹ suggests that our Lord's saying: "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them", recalls the Rabbinic saying about the *Shekinah* quoted above, and implies that the Lord made the same claim on His own behalf.²

The full force of this interpretation of the Incarnation becomes clear only when we remember that the idea of the presence in the Temple was not thought of as a contemporary fact by those who wrote of it. The exilic and post-exilic writers project their vision of the glory dwelling with men into the past or the future.³ The presence which Ezekiel in his vision saw depart from the Temple does not seem to have been regarded as returned to the restored Temple after the exile. The theology of this period stresses instead the transcendent remoteness of God; His name may no longer be spoken, and the earlier strata of the Old Testament are edited to remove any anthropomorphism or realistic stories about the presence of God on earth. The *Shekinah* itself is one of the means by which the theophanies can be spoken of without risk to the transcendence of the Holy One.

Thus the presence of God with His people is taken up into the eschato-

¹ *Life and Liturgy*, 1956, p. 135.

² cf. also James 2: 1, where Christ is called the *doxa*, or *Shekinah*.

³ Ramsey, *loc. cit.* W. J. Phythian-Adams, *The Way of At-One-Ment*, 1944, pp. 31f.

logical hope of a new and better redemption, expected in the return from the exile, and in part, though not in full, realized then. The exile, and the destruction of the Temple, is God's judgment on His people for their profanation of His worship by apostasy and social evil. The presence is withdrawn, and if it returns, then it will be when God has mercy on His people, and restores them in a New Covenant. The Apostles of Christ announce the fulfilment of all these prophecies, and among them the most mysterious and awe-inspiring of all, the return of the tabernacling glory to men. The coming of Christ is the presence of God with His people.

Thus the foundation of Christian worship is also the presence of God, now understood in a new way. The Temple on Mount Sion, with its ordinances of sacrificial worship, has become obsolete, because its prophetic meaning has been fulfilled in Christ, and it does not long survive, as a physical entity, the loss of its place in the purposes of God. Asked for a sign of His right to cleanse the Jewish Temple from its profanation by commerce, Jesus replies: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."¹ St. John tells us that he spoke of the Temple of His body. In Pauline theology the Church is the Body of Christ, and it is not surprising therefore that we find the Church also described as the Temple, the spiritual temple in which the Spirit of God dwells.²

We may link these sayings with the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman, who asks for a ruling from Jesus about the true place of worship: "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. . . ."³ This text is a favourite one with Christians who like to set up a Greek and idealist opposition between the spiritual and the material, and on the surface it is easy to suppose that the purport of these words, even in their context, and especially as translated in our English versions, is to set an inward and "spiritual" (i.e. mental) worship against a localized, outward and ceremonial worship, in which case the worship of the early Church, as of traditional Christianity, would stand condemned.

But surely the worship in spirit and in truth, which befits the God who is Spirit (not *a* Spirit—a quite unbiblical expression), is the wor-

¹ John 2: 19ff.; cf. Mark 14:58.

² 1 Cor. 3: 16f.; 2 Cor. 6: 16; Eph. 2: 21.

³ John 4: 21, 23.

ship rendered possible by the coming of Jesus the Christ, who is Himself the truth, and who gives the Spirit of God to His people. Thus the worship of the Church, which is offered in the Spirit, as the community assembles to constitute the Temple of God, and in the truth, that is both Christ's word and Christ Himself, and which approaches God through Jesus Christ, is the real fulfilment of these words. That worship is not confined to the Temple in Jerusalem, for the Temple is now every Christian congregation duly assembled in the name of Christ. But it is not necessarily an inward act, lacking any outward or ceremonial embodiment. On the contrary, the supreme act of Christian worship, which most perfectly fulfils the deepest meaning of our Lord's words, is the Eucharist, which is irrevocably linked to outward actions and material things.

The Church is thus the fulfilment both of the synagogue and of the Temple. It is both the true Temple, where spiritual sacrifice is offered acceptably to God, and also the true synagogue, the two or three gathered together around the indwelling presence of Christ. Thus, as we shall see, the worship of the Church takes over aspects from both the main forms of Jewish worship, as indeed it does also from those ritual meals which were also occasions of worship. In both, however, the presence of Christ is a reality so certain that it can almost be taken for granted. And yet, if we say that, we are false to an element which is central to the biblical conception of the presence. If our Lord's presence is realized and welcomed at every Christian assembly for worship, that presence is hidden from the world, and known only by faith and by its appointed signs in the sacraments.

It is also true to say that His presence, realized on earth during the period of Jesus' dwelling with men, has been withdrawn again since the Ascension, and is once more hidden, if not veiled, as in the Holy Place. Jesus has passed through the veil, as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us; but He has gone still wearing our humanity, and as our Fore-runner, and our faith gives us an anchorage in Him in the true Holy Place.¹ Indeed, as St. Paul teaches us, our life is hidden with Him in God; we are already in the heavenly places.² In the worship of the Church we are already taking part in the heavenly liturgy which is offered before the throne of God.³ But at present these awe-inspiring truths are known to us by faith and not by sight. We await a *Parousia*,

¹ Heb. 9: 23ff.; 10: 19ff.; 12: 2; 6: 18ff.

² Col. 3: 3; Eph. 2: 6.

³ Heb. 12: 22ff.

a presence which is also a coming, the return of Christ to usher in the state of glory.

Thus the presence of Christ in Christian worship, known through the Spirit which constitutes the body of believers into the Temple of God, is, like that gift of the Spirit itself, an earnest of what is yet to be in fullness. When the Church prays *Maranatha*, Our Lord, come, she is not only praying for His presence at the liturgy, but also for that final presence, or *Parousia*, which will close history and bring in God's Kingdom, as it will also bring to an end all indirectness and expectation in the worship of the Church. And yet conversely the presence which is granted now is in fact one with that final presence. It is the presence of the same Lord who will then come. His presence is real, His nearness complete. But between that near presence and our sight of Him is an impenetrable veil of mystery, which only our faith pierces. We do not, in any ordinary sense of the word, experience His presence. We fall into sentimental and unbiblical exaggerations if we take literally the language Christians sometimes use about experiencing the presence of Christ in prayer or worship. He is known to us there not by some numinous feeling which may visit us, or may not, but by the signs He has left us of His presence, the word and the sacraments. These speak to faith with a certainty that is far beyond any feeling or sensation, which may only mislead and deceive.

Thus the sober faith and joyful thanksgiving of Christian worship rests upon the gift of a real yet mediated presence, which arouses in the Church a longing for its fulfilment in the Vision of God. The element of longing expectation of the *Parousia* can never be removed from the triumphant realization of the promised coming of Christ in word and sacrament at every Christian liturgy. Christian worship always points beyond itself to the coming Kingdom.

Our consideration of the presence of God has brought clearly into view a third aspect of the biblical doctrine of worship. Worship is offered to God not simply by individuals, but by a people, and by individuals as members of that people. The worship of which the Bible speaks is the worship of Israel, addressed to the God who has in His Covenant become their God. In the New Testament the Church emerges as a worshipping community, constituted by the New Covenant. It is the true people of God, the *ecclesia* or *Qahal Yahweh*. It is not so much a new Israel as Israel renewed. As such it continues to worship God, and indeed is most itself when it is engaged in worship. Of the apostolic Church we read in Acts 2: 46f.: "And day by day, continuing

stedfastly with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God."

Here we may observe both the newness of the Church and its continuity with the old Israel. While they could, the earliest Christians continued to worship in the Temple. In this they were following the example of their Lord, who had Himself faithfully observed the round of Temple worship, and had taught in the Temple. There is not the slightest suggestion in our Lord's teaching of criticism of the Temple worship, though there is a call to worship with utter integrity and singleness of heart.¹ If that worship is indeed to be superseded by the worship of the spiritual Temple, its provisional validity is unquestioned.²

But there is also a new element, the breaking of bread, itself not without continuity with the old. The breaking of bread, associated with the taking of food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, evidently refers to the earliest form of the celebration of the Christian Eucharist. Recent scholarship is bringing out more clearly the continuity of the eucharistic rite with the Jewish ritual meals, with their common element of blessing God over the food.³ This remains true whether the Last Supper was, as the Synoptics represent it, the Passover meal,⁴ or, as the Fourth Gospel suggests, another and more commonly celebrated fellowship meal between Jesus and His disciples, less pregnant with the redemptive associations of the Exodus.⁵ The liberal myth of the simple meal of Jesus with His disciples, uncluttered

¹ Our Lord's use of Hosca 6, which might be quoted in support of the view that He attacked the Temple worship, seems rather to bear on the tradition of the elders. Thus J. S. McEwen (*loc. cit.*) is misleading when he says: "Jesus adopts the prophetic conception of worship, and gives the inward spiritual element absolute primacy. He does not so much attack ceremonial worship as simply ignore it." The whole passage in McEwen's otherwise admirable article is a surprising example of the misrepresentation by good scholars of the facts of N.T. worship, in the name of a theology which rests on unbiblical antitheses. See also *infra*, Detached Note.

² In the passage quoted above from John 4, Jesus also says (v. 22): "Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know: for salvation is of the Jews."

³ See Cranfield in *Theological Word Book of the Bible*, s.v. Thank; G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 1946, pp. 50ff.; Bouyer, *op. cit.* pp. 118ff. (largely based on Dix); and in great detail, J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 1955.

⁴ Formidably argued by Jeremias, *op. cit.*

⁵ See esp. Dix, *loc. cit.*, and authorities cited by him. But see Jeremias in reply.

with sacrificial theology or religious ceremonial, is withering away under the blasts of a more realistic reconstruction of the Last Supper.

Whether we follow the Synoptics and their modern upholders, such as J. Jeremias, or adopt one or other of the alternative identifications based on the Fourth Gospel, the Last Supper can only be seen in the light of known Jewish practice. It does not greatly matter for our present purposes, in seeking the meaning of our worship, whether we are to look to the more precisely known Passover ritual, or to some other form of religious meal. In either case we are to visualize an occasion of religious solemnity, with a traditional order, from which any deviation will be significant. We are to look for the offering of traditional prayers, more or less according to a set form, and especially for elaborate graces at the beginning of the meal, over the bread, and at the end, over the wine, in which God is thanked for His bounty in creation, and especially for this creature of which the assembly is about to partake. The Jew blessed anything by thanking God over it, and thus consecrated it for man's use. Thus St. Paul (if indeed it was he) is faithful to the tradition of his people, as well as in another sense revolutionary, when he says: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4: 4f.).¹

Thus the institution of the Eucharist consisted simply in the addition of the "Words of Institution" to actions and prayers of thanksgiving to God for creation (and also redemption, if the Last Supper was indeed a Passover meal) already familiar, and likely to be practised in the future on appropriate occasions. The work of the scholars we have cited does not seem to permit us to reach a definite conclusion about the precise way in which the early Church understood Jesus' intention that the rite should be continued after His resurrection. It is probable that the manner of the Christian eucharistic celebration is governed by the meals taken by the Church with the risen Lord during the Forty Days of resurrection appearances, and not only by the Last Supper. There were evidently many matters of importance communicated at this time which have been veiled in the *disciplina arcani* which, as Jeremias points out,² prevented the reporting in the Gospels of the manner of the resurrection itself. The very frequent celebration of the Eucharist by the earliest Christians does not indeed seem to accord very well with

¹ cf. *Berakoth* 35a (quoted Cranfield, *loc. cit.*): "It is forbidden to taste of this world without saying a blessing." See the whole article. Cf. Dix, *loc. cit.*

² *op. cit.* p. 60.

the thesis, which Jeremias has made seem in itself the more probable, that the Last Supper was the Passover meal, unless we suppose there to have been some other element in the background of Jesus' actions, and their interpretation by the disciples, besides the Passover ritual itself.

Jeremias, who is conscious of this difficulty, regards the Last Supper as falling also into a series of Messianic meals, which, he considers, Jesus took with His disciples from Caesarea Philippi onwards.¹ The Last Supper thus becomes a turning point, indeed, but still a member in the whole series of meals which Jesus took with His disciples from the beginning of His ministry, which gained a new significance from the time of Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, which were continued in such meals after the Resurrection as that of Emmaus, and led on into the regular daily or weekly celebration of the Christian Eucharist. The Eucharist will therefore take over from these meals their character as a thanksgiving to God for His redemption in the Exodus and in Jesus—we should not forget that the Passover was a *joyful* celebration—as well as for His gifts in creation, a thanksgiving which characterized every Jewish meal and its graces; and it will also inherit their looking forward to the Messianic banquet in the heavenly Kingdom. In one sense the Last Supper, and even more the Eucharist, is that banquet, but that sense is the subtle one, which pervades the theology of the New Testament, in which the Kingdom is believed both to have come in Jesus, and also to be coming at His return. Thus, as we have already noted, when Jesus comes at the Eucharist, He comes as the victorious Messiah, to celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with His Bride the Church; but the celebration is not yet fulfilled; it takes place “in a mystery”, in which the future fulfilment breaks in to the present through the sacramental signs.

The distinctive worship of the newly constituted Christian community, which supplements the Temple worship which, as members of Israel, they faithfully continue, is characterized, therefore, by the traditional elements of thanksgiving and eschatological hope, which show how deeply it is rooted in its Jewish past. But its distinctiveness derives from the coming of Jesus the Christ. When God visits His people in the Incarnation, He gathers from them by His Word a faithful remnant, who constitute, with the Messiah, the eschatological community. Thus the old image of the marriage of God with His people is profoundly deepened in the New Testament understanding

¹ *op. cit.* pp. 136f., etc.

of the Church. The Church is the Bride of Christ, and is one flesh with Him. As the new Eve, she fulfils the union of Eve with Adam in the creation. From another point of view, the Church is the Body of the new Adam, the new humanity itself. For Christ, as we have seen, is not only God's Word but also man's response. He fulfils Israel also, and the Church's being Israel is dependent upon her being in Him. This is surely the significance of our Lord's own words in John 15: 1ff. The Vine is Israel, as in Psalm 80 and elsewhere. The Pauline image of the Body, which may also take its origin from our Lord's own words (e.g. Matt. 25: 40; Acts 9: 4), teaches essentially the same doctrine of unity of the redeemed with the Redeemer from whom they draw their life.

Thus the worship of the Church, the thanksgiving of the redeemed, as we have called it, is also based upon our Lord's own response to the love of the Father. The Eucharist is both the proclamation of the mystery of redemption, of the fulfilled purpose of God in Christ to break down all barriers to the unity of mankind in the Body of Christ, and in Christ with God; and it is also the taking up of the Church into the fulfilled response of Christ to that very Word of God which He embodied. The Eucharist takes us up into the *latreia* of the Suffering Servant of God, that self-offering to God which embraces all that we mean by worship and all that we mean by service. His obedience, which began with His first conscious act, and was renewed throughout His life in continual surrender of His will to the Father, was consummated on the Cross in the surrender of His whole being; He gave himself away without reserve in order that the Father might be perfectly glorified in the doing of His will to the point of death.

That is worship: that is the act in which the whole worshipping life of the created universe reaches its climax, in the light of which all the rest must be understood. And since that suffering service which Christ offered to God was also necessarily the wholly adequate act of reconciliation of man to God, it is given to us as the mystery of God's redemptive purpose, which makes possible our own worship, as reconciled children of the Father.¹ In the Church's worship that mystery is proclaimed in word and sacrament, while she responds to it in the power of the Holy Spirit, through whom Christ also offered Himself.

Thus we return, in the light of our study of the biblical theology of worship, to the point to which our word study led us. Christ is the essence of worship, and our understanding of the Church's worship must take its starting point from Him. In Him is embodied the down-

¹ cf. Col. 1.

ward movement of God's love and grace, as He reveals Himself to man, and reconciles man to Himself; and also the upward movement of man's response, perfectly dependent upon that love, and drawing from it all the resources of strength which are needed to make that response in all the circumstances of life, and even in death itself. Thus He sums up all that we have so far found of the great biblical themes which govern worship. He brings God's redemption to the world, and also offers in His life and death the *eucharistia*, the thanksgiving, to which He gave sacramental embodiment at the Last Supper.

Christ's obedience unto death is the supreme acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the Creator over His creation, which restores it from false independence to its true relationship of dependence. Because that obedience does not stop short of death, it also becomes the confession of God's righteous judgment on the sin of false independence.

Christ, as God incarnate, Immanuel, God with us, brings the presence of God into the world, and so must be the focus of our worship. It is in the presence of Christ in the midst of those who are gathered together in His Name that Christian worship takes place.

As the fulfilment of Israel, the Suffering Servant who by His obedience makes many righteous, He is the Head of the Church which now worships. His thanksgiving, rendered most explicitly at the Last Supper, is the foundation of the Eucharist, the distinctively Christian act of worship.

Accordingly, the Church's worship will be best conformed to its true nature when its pattern echoes the christological pattern we have seen in Scripture. In the first place, the Church must be attentive to the proclamation of the Word.

The first thing that the Church is to do when it assembles together, therefore, is to hear the full Word of God as given in Christ and as brought to us by the apostolic ministry. . . . Of course the mystery is not only "word"—in so far as for men "word" can be opposed to "deed" or "being". But since the mystery is a personal love that desires to communicate itself to living persons, it must be accepted by us first of all under this aspect of word; and the other implications of the Mystery can be revealed to us only in dependence upon this primary aspect.¹

Christ is the Word of God, and he is the One who is proclaimed, whether in Scripture, in preaching, in sacrament, or in the words of the

¹ Bouyer, *op. cit.* p. 108.

liturgy. Worship must begin not with man but with God, with the descent to us of the divine charity which loved us first. If we do not begin at that point, our worship is not Christian. If our worship is to be conformed to the christological pattern of thanksgiving and obedience, it must begin with the proclamation of the name of the redeeming God to whom our thanks and obedience are due.

Only in the second place may we speak of our response, for this, too, is given in the Word. As we have seen, Christ's reconciliation includes the fulfilment of man's response to the revelation of the love of God. As the Word of God enters humanity, it creates, as it must since it is *God's* word, its own response. Christ's human life is in every respect the perfect answer to the divine love which He brought to man. His life and death consummate that response, and His resurrection, to be life-giving Spirit, as the Second Adam, makes possible the communication of His response to the humanity of which He is the Head. By the proclamation of the mystery of His fulfilled response, through word and sacrament in the worship of the Church, that response passes into the Church and becomes her own, for it was made on her behalf, and in the humanity which is hers. And so the second aspect of Christian worship is our joining in the *latreia* of Christ, offering through Him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Church, which is gathered and constituted by the Word, becomes the spiritual Temple, in which acceptable sacrifices are offered to God.

But because of the nature of Christ's *latreia*, our participation in it is not completed by the liturgy. Not only the Eucharist, but the whole of Christian life is sacrificial. Christ's own *latreia*, which is a unity, comes none the less, at the end of His ministry, to a double climax, in the Upper Room and on the Cross. In the Upper Room, in the same night in which He was betrayed, He gathered up a whole life of thanksgiving and obedience in the blessing of the Name of God over the bread and wine that lay before Him on the Table, as the principal elements in the ritual meal that He was to eat with His disciples. In the new words that He spoke, calling the bread His body, and the wine His blood, He showed that man's thanksgiving to God is completed neither in the offering of praise by the lips, nor in the obedience of good works, but only in the offering of oneself, one's whole being, to the God from whom it is derived. In the offering of the Body of Christ, in the shedding of His Blood, on the Cross of Calvary, the *latreia* of the Servant of God is completed.

Absolutely speaking, it was not necessary to that perfect act of worship that it should have a ritual embodiment in the Last Supper. God, who hears the unspoken thoughts of men, knew of His Son's constantly renewed intention to "do His will",¹ which had been the whole meaning of His life to that point, and would shortly be tested to the limit in the agony in the garden. In the perfect communion of the Father and the Son, it did not need to be said in words that the Cross was not a political murder undergone at most with resignation and fortitude, but the supreme opportunity of self-oblation. But for the Church's sake, Christ's death needed both an interpretation, and a means by which its sacrificial efficacy might pass into the life of the Church. The "words of institution" both interpret the coming death as a sacrifice, indeed as *the* sacrifice inaugurating the new and final Covenant of God with men, and also create the sacramental ordinance by which men could be taken up into it throughout the ensuing history of the world. As the Word of God, they create the sacrifice of both the Head and the Body.

Thus, if the essence of Christ's worship lay in the deed, to which His words pointed, though the words had a more than accidental relationship with the deed which they both interpreted and formulated in explicit intention, the essence of the Church's worship will lie not only in her liturgy but in her life. None the less, we must be careful not to fall into the common error of supposing therefore that worship is subordinate to good works, that we can neglect the liturgy in favour of the duties of our station in life, and plead Christ as our example. For our case is not the same as His. For if it is true that He is our example, He is that as our Redeemer, and not, like the saints, as one of the redeemed. For while in His case the specific acts of worship (which He did not as a matter of fact in the least neglect) were simply the making explicit of a permanent current of will, by which He offered Himself in worship at every moment, whether in action or suffering, our worship is a participation in His, and so has a status in our life even beyond that which His worship had for Him. Our lives are not, as His was, acceptable as worship in themselves; indeed the only acceptable worship which we have is His. His sacrifice is all we have to offer. But that sacrifice is meant to pass into our lives, and to bear fruit there. We are called to union with His Passion in our daily lives, and this, too, is worship.

Thus our worship is both an end in itself and the means to a further

¹ Ps. 40: 8; Heb. 10: 7.

end. It is an end in itself in so far as it directly glorifies God by the proclamation of the mystery of His fulfilled obedience, and so causes us to share in the offering of that one perfect sacrifice, which is the permanent substance of the Church's offering. To that perfect offering of the Head, which the Body is permitted, in her liturgical assembly, to call her own, nothing can be added. The Church's worship needs no completion, other than that which by its very nature it receives from the Head of the Church, in whom has been fulfilled what in the lives of the members can never be more than partial. We are not to regard our worship as the gathering of strength and inspiration for the true service of God outside the church building, for that would be to put ourselves in a position that only the Redeemer, and not the redeemed, can occupy.

But if our worship is indeed a participation in His, then it is certainly His intention, as the Head of a Body, that the Body should share in the obedience of the Head. Thus St. Paul speaks of filling up in His flesh that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ, for His Body's sake.¹ While we should be chary of too dogmatically confident an interpretation of those mysterious words, the experience not only of the martyrs and saints but of countless lesser-known members of Christ shows that the Passion of Christ, though fully accomplished in Him, has not faded into the dead past, but continues in His Body the Church, as those who have been identified with His death by Baptism are brought by Christ to the life of resurrection through the experience of suffering with Him.

Doubtless St. Paul does not mean that there is anything lacking in the sufferings of Christ, but that there is something lacking, which by grace he may fill up, in his own participation in those sufferings, in order that he may have something to offer, by way of intercession, for the Church. He does not mean that his own sufferings redeem him, or even others, considered in themselves; but because through the mystical union of the Head with the members, they actually are Christ's sufferings, which Paul is permitted to share, he may also share in the joy, for the sake of which Christ gladly endured the shame of the Cross,² of being used by God to free men from the sway of evil, and bring them back to the Father's love.

In this exceedingly qualified sense it may indeed be said that the worship of the liturgy is a means to something outside itself. As the means by which the *latreia* of Christ passes into us, it is the means to

¹ Col. 1:24.

² Heb. 12:2.

an answering *latreia* in us which begins in the liturgy and is continued in our lives. We shall be wrong if we identify our Eucharist solely with Christ's Last Supper, and our daily obedience with His Cross, for the Eucharist contains the Cross in its fullness, and nothing can be added to that. But since it indeed contains the Cross, and conveys it to us, it makes possible the extension of true worship from the liturgy to those circumstances in life in which Christ's obedience passes into ours, in which His Passion takes place in us. Moreover, that this should take place is part of the intention of our worship, and if that were not so, there would be a real danger of our worship becoming open to the criticism of being merely ceremonial. For unless our participation in the liturgy is in fact an offering of ourselves, to be a reasonable sacrifice, acceptable to God, it is not a participation in Christ's worship. None the less, it is Christ's worship which is the centre of the liturgy, and our own is entirely dependent upon His.

Thus our summary of the biblical teaching about worship seems fully to substantiate our original contention that the essence of worship lies in Christ, considered as the true *Jacob's Ladder*, upon which God's love comes down to earth, and man's response travels back to God. It will now be our task to examine how these great scriptural themes are worked out in the actual worship of the Church, and to consider what will happen if one or other subordinate theme from this great complex which centres in Christ is taken as determinative in the worship of a Christian tradition. Only then shall we see clearly the consequences that will follow from a resolute persistence in basing both our theology and our practice in worship on its God-given foundation.

DETACHED NOTE

ON PRIESTLY AND PROPHETIC CONCEPTIONS OF WORSHIP

I have not found it necessary in the text to allude to the supposed opposition, in the Bible and in Christian worship, between priestly and prophetic conceptions of worship. I have felt free to draw upon basic elements in the priestly tradition of the Old Testament without offering any special justification for doing so, since I have discussed them at all times in the light of their Christian fulfilment. It is in fact my view that whatever truth there may be historically in the contention that such a clash or conflict existed at certain periods in Old Testament history, it cannot become the basis for any conclusions about the nature of Christian worship, which must start from Jesus Christ, who fulfilled

and transcended both the priestly and the prophetic views, if these can indeed be distinguished as sharply as some theologians allege. In the life of Christ the two outlooks fuse and are one thing. To interpret our Lord's life and death in terms of only one of these categories is to impoverish our theology, and to contradict the witness of the New Testament itself, which manifestly employs both of them without embarrassment.

The Old Testament raises a sharper problem, inasmuch as it does unquestionably record prophetic denunciations not merely of the abuse of the sacrificial system, but of the system itself.¹ But Christians ought not to need to be reminded that whatever authority the Old Testament has for them it has as a whole, in so far as it points to Christ. Unless the New Testament decisively rejects any strand of the Old Testament, we must use it, as the New Testament itself does, as a means to the interpretation of the person and work of Christ. The Church canonized the Law as well as the Prophets, and in this she was faithful to our Lord, who was emphatic that not only the Prophets but also the Law bore witness to Himself. The habit of liberal theologians, which has been carried on by some of their neo-orthodox successors, of interpreting the Old Testament almost exclusively as a prophetic document, blinds them both to the abiding authority of other parts of the Old Testament, and also to aspects of the New Testament which go to the very heart of its Christology.

Thus we can no more take the prophetic denunciation of the sacrificial system as final than we can take that system itself. The Old Testament records a dialectic between priest and prophet which is not resolved until the coming of Christ. While we may suppose that Mosaic religion itself antedates the differentiation to which we are referring, and on its own level achieves a unity between religion and ethics in which each takes its place in the one act of the fulfilment of the Covenant, contact with the fertility religions of the Canaanites seems to have caused a distortion in Israelite religion, whereby the Lord Himself was worshipped as a nature God, and His sacrifices assimilated to the fertility rituals of the Baalim. Thus the prophetic protest covers not merely the morals but the doctrine of the priestly leaders, and in a passionate assertion of the uniqueness of the Lord, denounces not merely the abuse of sacrificial worship by those who come to it without clean hands and with no intention of keeping the ethical parts of the Law, but the very notion that God can be worshipped by sacrifice.

¹ Amos 5: 21-26; Isaiah 1: 11-17; Micah 6: 6-8; Ps. 40: 6-8, 51: 16-17; etc.

The Law itself bears the marks of the purification, though not as yet abolition, of sacrificial worship, and the book of Deuteronomy fuses sacrifice and ethics in a cultural unity that has won the respect of the most ardent advocate of the prophetic religion. The prophetic protest was taken up into the teaching of the priests, but the sacrifices continued. It is significant that although the whole nation absorbed the prophetic teaching that the Exile was a punishment for the very abuses that the pre-exilic prophets had denounced, it is in this period that the most exalted conceptions of the status and dignity of the Temple worship are found, and so far from the nation turning with relief to the supposedly purer ethical worship of the synagogue, the attempt is made, under the leadership of the post-exilic *prophets*, as well as of survivors of the priestly caste, to restore the Temple and its worship.¹

Thus when Israel turns in repentance to the Lord, and receives from Him restoration of its national life, the centre of that restored life remains a purified Temple worship, and the strict observance of its regulations. A merely ethical worship, without the mysteries of the sacrificial system, is found to be inadequate to express the depths of the relationship between God and man, and especially of the wound in that relationship which the sin of man inflicts, and which calls for costly expiation. And so it is in the period after the exile that the ritual of the Day of Atonement moves to the centre of the spiritual life of Israel. The worship of Israel comes to be haunted by a sense of tragic unworthiness of the Lord who is worshipped, which is one of many manifestations of Israel's eschatological longing. The demand of the prophets, that mercy should replace sacrifice, is found to be unattainable. The righteousness of man is not such that it can replace the religion of sacrifice: if the sacrificial offerings are stained and rendered unacceptable by the unrighteousness of the offerer, no righteousness he can attain will suffice to replace the mystery of sacrificial expiation.

When our Lord comes, the true meaning of both the priestly and the prophetic conception of worship is fulfilled. While He takes up the prophetic insight that the essence of worship is the offering of a righteous will, and that, without this, sacrifice and observance are not merely useless but blasphemous, He also lives out in Himself the true meaning of the sacrifices, and becomes Himself an offering in blood. His perfect righteousness, which fulfils all that the prophets saw as God's demand upon man, is gathered up in the end in a self-offering through death that fulfils also the priestly insight of the mysterious meaning of costly

¹ See Haggai 1:1—2: 9; Zech. 1: 16; 3; 7: 8—8 end (N.B.); cf. Ezra 5: 1ff.

sacrifice as the foundation of man's communion with God. Thus Christianity centres in a doctrine of Atonement, and speaks of Christ's death in the language of sacrifice, and of the Christian life in Christ in the same terms; but it interprets the content of sacrifice in terms derived from the prophets. It is impossible to say that Christ's own life and teaching, or the Christian life founded upon it, is more prophetic than priestly, more priestly than prophetic. In Him the two turn out to be one.

What we have just said in biblical terms can be said again in the more generalized language of theology. Christ's life transcends both ethics and religion. Religion is never adequate, because it reduces the demand of God to something that can be fully and exactly apprehended and fulfilled, and so is in constant danger of subordinating God to man's need. Ethics can equally easily turn into a moralism that likewise thinks that it can measure and apprehend God's demand, and that the natural man can fulfil it. Christ offers instead a new creation, founded on His own perfect fulfilment of God's will, and calls us to a worship that consists essentially in the offering of ourselves in Him. His own sacrifice stands as the fulfilled offering of man to God, and exhausts all that is meant by sacrifice. We are called to share in it by a single act of self-oblation, that begins in worship and spreads out into the whole of life. The Christian is called to participate in a response to the divine love which has already been fully made by a perfect human love for God, given to God by One who is not only the Son of God but the Head of the new humanity. In so far as by grace he does participate in that fulfilled response, he too will offer to God not his possessions merely, as in sacrifice, nor simply his obedience in good works, but his whole self, that is, his love. His worship, made in Christ, is that whole offering in all its aspects. It must begin in worship in the narrow sense, where in word and sacrament he is made to participate in Christ's self-offering. But the reality of that explicit worship will show itself in the continuance of the same act of self-oblation, in an implicit form, throughout the whole of life. To set the one against the other is to darken counsel, and to hamper the growth of the spiritual life.

This being understood, it is possible to return to the priestly elements in the Old Testament and view them with more sympathy than they sometimes receive from Protestant theologians. If they are understood in the light of Christian worship, which also has its priestly elements, and in the light of a conception of holiness which Christ fulfilled, they need not be set apart from "prophetic religion" and its supposed

reality and vitality as if they consisted merely in the dead performance of ritual forms.

If we want to understand the ethos of Jewish worship, we must learn to see together crude slaughter and spiritual beauty, ritual sacrifice and inward oblation; to realize that the forbidding framework is the skeleton of a living body, and that in practice ceremonial rules and the offering of the free spirit can and still do live comfortably side by side. . . . Anyone who tried to grasp the character of, e.g., Roman Catholic worship, by careful study of the ritual directions to the priest in the Missal, or the highly Levitical Lenten ordinances, but never went to Mass, would fall far short of the truth..¹

¹ Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*, 1946, pp. 200f., especially p. 201 n. 1. Cf. also the judicious discussion of this matter in Bouyer, *Le Mystère Pascal*, 1945, pp. 273-77 (E.T. *The Paschal Mystery*, 1951).

III

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

That we may come together, . . . to act and to hear God's word, . . . that our dear Lord Himself may speak to us through His Holy Word . . . that we in our turn may speak to Him through prayer and songs of praise.

MARTIN LUTHER, *Torgau sermon*, 1544.¹

The fundamental ministry, the fundamental "service", the fundamental *leitourgia* of the Church . . . is the permanent proclamation, the *kerugma*, of the Mystery, through the ever living and acting Word which is always present in its Apostles as God is present in It.

L. BOUYER, *Life and Liturgy*, p. 108.

SINCE CHRIST HIMSELF is the essence of worship, bringing down the love of God to men, and taking man's response to His love back to the throne of God, Christian worship, made in Him, will display an analogous two-sidedness; it must enact first the descending movement of the divine charity, and then man's response in Christ. As our two quotations, one from the first of the Reformers, the other from a modern Roman Catholic writer, agree in suggesting, the proclamation of the divine *agape* is the first and fundamental task of the Church when she assembles for divine worship. Where that task is understood and fulfilled, by whatever means, the Church will be continually renewed by the proclamation of the event of God's self-disclosure, on which she is founded, and her worship will always be a response to that event. While the event is past and gone on the historical plane, it remains a living reality in the heavenly places, where Christ presents His finished work to the Father, and it comes to us anew in all its mysterious efficacy in the liturgical proclamation.

Without the work of Christ, bringing God down to men, and gathering men in Himself before God, there can be no worship at all, and indeed no Church. It is therefore true that the Word is constitutive of the Church, for it is Jesus Christ, God incarnate, who is the living and true Word of God, and the Church depends wholly upon

¹ Quoted by Herbert Goltzen in *Ways of Worship* (ed. Edwall, Hayman and Maxwell), 1951, p. 80.

His work of revelation and redemption. The liturgy, therefore, must serve in the first place the proclamation of the Word of God, so that Christ may continually renew and build up the Church upon its one foundation. Christian worship cannot happen unless the Church is brought to God by Christ. But in agreeing that the fundamental purpose and function of the liturgy is the proclamation of the Word, we need not identify this proclamation exclusively with what is verbal, with the reading of Scripture and with the sermon. These must indeed remain the primary form of proclamation, for they above all make clear that our worship is our answer to God who has first addressed us, and they tell us what He is saying in speech and language, which are fundamental to all human communication. Not only the readings and the sermon, however, but the whole liturgy, should be thought of as an act of proclamation, and it is in this inclusive sense that we wish now to speak of the action of Christ in His Word.

For the biblical view of worship it is axiomatic, as we have found, that man worships the God who has made Himself known, and that worship is to be governed, both in fact and form, by this revelation. We "praise His holy Name"—that is, we worship Him in His self-revelation. If God had not revealed Himself, we could not praise Him. It is true that Christian worship is indissolubly linked with the heavenly worship of "angels and archangels", with the whole company of heaven whose *Sanctus* the Church echoes on earth. But unlike them, we do not see God face to face: our worship on earth would have no sure basis if it were not for God's revelation of Himself. Though worship might begin to be offered, in expression of the half-understood longings of the human heart, to the unknown God, it could never transcend a purified idolatry, and in times like our own, when men are solving for themselves the technical problems for which they once sought the assistance of their gods, would probably be abandoned. But we, in our Lord's words, "worship what we know". God has revealed Himself to us, and though even in His revelation of Himself He remains the supreme mystery, He has disclosed His majesty and love in countless acts in history, and above all in Jesus Christ. He has revealed Himself as One who must call forth from man adoration, thanksgiving and praise beyond anything that can be uttered.

Because God shows Himself to be the unutterable mystery, our worship cannot be dependent only upon what can be said in words. In worship we are in touch not only with truths about God, that we can express in the words even of Scripture, or of our prayers, but with

the gracious presence of God Himself; God in His self-revelation gives us Himself. It is true, indeed, that His presence would be so obscure to us that our worship could take no definite form, if it were not for its expression in words and images, in formulated truths. Wordless and imageless contemplation is not in general a possible form for corporate worship, and even in private prayer presupposes the words and actions of the corporate liturgy. On the contrary, Christian worship is able to take form, and acquire an intelligible structure, as it must if it is to be a corporate activity of the Church, because the revelation of God includes also the words and deeds in which men have, by divine help, expressed the knowledge of God which He has given to them in Christ. But the forms themselves, indispensable as they are, cannot give reality to Christian worship. Only the presence of the living God makes our worship a communion with Him.

The revelation of God takes place in His acts in history, and above all in Christ, His life and teaching, and His death and resurrection. Nothing can be added to the revelation in Christ, who has come to the world at Bethlehem and has been crucified on Calvary under Pontius Pilate, until He comes again in *Parousia* and *Apocalypsis*, in that final presence and revelation which will bring history to an end, and bring us face to face with God. Christ left means whereby that historic revelation might also be proclaimed by His Apostles to the world, and by the Church after them to all men at all times. When the Word of Christ is proclaimed in word and sacrament, the mystery of God is present, the revelation is renewed in all its "actuality", and the risen Christ is present in the proclamation of His Word.

The liturgy, which enshrines the Church's proclamation of Christ in word and sacrament, is in fact the principal means by which the one revelation is continually renewed in the life of the Church. In Scripture reading and sermon, in sacrament and in liturgical action, Christ proclaims God to man. When men "hear and receive His holy Word" in the worship of the Church, the revelation of God is at work, as it was in the historic coming of Christ, and through Christ men are brought into the presence of God.

Thus the Word of God, proclaimed in the liturgy, in accordance with the nature of the original revelation, gives us both the presence of God and the symbols in which we conceive Him. God's presence, if our faith is awakened by the Word and the indwelling Spirit, brings us into relationship with Him, and makes our knowledge of Him real and not merely theoretical. The symbols (to use the most inclusive term

possible) give content to the mystery of the presence, and are therefore equally necessary for our embodied minds. The symbols are certainly in one sense "flesh and not spirit". Speech, material things, human actions, are all of this world, and in themselves cannot convey God to us. But when they are taken up by God into the work of revelation, they become charged with "spirit and life", so that the speech of man becomes the Word of God, the sacraments "visible words", and the actions of the liturgical drama the actions of Christ, the true though invisible Celebrant of all that is done.

The liturgical *Kerygma*, mentioned in our quotation from Bouyer, is therefore a rich and many-sided matter, which starts with the commonplace, a man reading, or a man standing at a table and taking bread and wine as a host might at his own table, and opens out upon the depths of the ultimate mystery, upon the creation of the world and its re-making in Christ, and upon the ineffable God Himself. Its meaning, to use words of a theologian from yet another tradition, is that the "church service is Divine action"¹ before it is human action. God makes Himself present to the world, and calls us into that presence in worship. He gives His presence in the Word, and also in the sacrament, considered as *verbum visibile*, following St. Augustine and the Reformers. (As we shall see, there are other aspects of the sacrament, of no less importance, but recognition of those should not lead us to deny the importance of this.) The whole liturgy in all its aspects, where it is faithful to its source and norm, is a many-sided proclamation of Christ, a proclamation in which the mystery proclaimed is itself contained.

We now return to the fact, mentioned above, that by this proclamation Christ gathers and constitutes His Church, as the community of those who hear Him in His Word, and worship Him in His presence there. Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, builds His Church in the world by calling men through the proclamation, and incorporating them into His own fulfilled response to the Father. Thus, this act of proclamation, which, as we have just seen, is the first aspect of the meaning of worship, is also the first constitutive element of the being of the Church. The Church comes into being in worship, as men gather round the proclamation of Christ, and it continues by constant renewal from the same source. The first business of the Church at all times is to be attentive to the Word of God. Again, we perhaps could not say this if we meant by Word something merely verbal, or if we intended to set Scripture and sermon against the sacraments; but if we

¹ Karl Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*, 1949, p. 192.

see the proclamation of the Word in all its sacramental depth, we shall not mistake the profundity of such a doctrine.

In the Word, then, lies not only the being, but also the continuity of the Church, in the form in which we must first recognize them. The essence of the Church is to be in Christ, and it is by the liturgical proclamation of Christ that men are incorporated in Him. The continuity of the Church must lie therefore also in Christ; the Church does not add to Christ, but brings men into His achieved fullness. That fullness is present in every true proclamation of Christ, remaining one and the same in every new utterance of the eternal Word. Accordingly, the first form of the embodiment of this continuity in the life of the Church will be the continuity of the Church's preaching and sacramental practice with that of the Apostles. Continuity in the hearing and confessing of the Word of Christ is the first and most essential of the forms of continuity that the Church may claim, and it is the first that should be considered when we examine doubtful cases of membership of the Catholic Church. It is Christ's will to keep His Church permanently abiding in Him through the living Word proclaimed in her liturgy.

We may go even further and claim that the Word also gives us our response to God. As we have many times stressed, that response is not to be thought of apart from Christ. We ought not to suppose that Christ gives the Word, whereas we provide the response. The Word includes its own response, for Christ is man as well as God, and His humanity does not lose its proper nature in being united to the God-head. His humanity is not just a screen for the divine action; it comes to the fullness of its human action precisely in being united to God. Christ is the One in whom Word and response are united, and it is only by an effort of abstraction that we can think of the one without the other. Thus, if we hear and receive the Word, we are necessarily taken up into Christ's fulfilled response. We are incorporated into His perfect *latreia* in a manner that is analogous with the incorporation of His own humanity in the *latreia* which the Second Person of the Trinity eternally offers to the Father, in the uncreated subordination of love which is His divine Being as the Word.

The ancient Church, which was profoundly conscious of this truth, saw the natural expression of it in the fact that the prayers of the Church are expressed very largely in the words of Scripture. In this way the response of the Church to the Word was also expressed by the Word. That is why when the Church uses the Psalms, as traditionally she does as the main substance of her prayers, the words of the ancient

Hebrew liturgy, or the private meditations of the Psalmist, are transformed in meaning, and become the words of Christ in His Body. As we take the inspired words upon our lips, and endeavour in the power of the Spirit to unite ourselves to the intentions which they express, we are coming to share the response of Christ to the Father's love.

To join in the liturgy in this way is not a mere devotional exercise, or to express a preference for a set traditional form over the free improvisation of a minister today, but to allow the redemptive work of Christ to go forward in us. When the liturgy is thus related to the response of Christ, it becomes evident that it is what it has been traditionally understood to be, the prayer of Christ, which we are called to share. This is true of the liturgy in general: it is evidently true in a special sense of the Eucharist, as we shall shortly see; but it is also true in a way that we cannot afford to ignore of the Divine Office, with its basis in the Psalms. For we cannot doubt that the Psalter was Christ's prayer-book, as it has become ours after Him—His dying words from the Cross are sufficient proof of that. If so, the words which have been taken on the lips of the Incarnate Word of God, which have been adopted by Him in His historical life as the expression of His human response to the Father, are now charged with a significance that fully justifies all that the Church has traditionally said of the Psalter, and of the Divine Office whereby it is traditionally arranged for the Church's use.

In this short consideration of man's response as given in the Word, we have already begun to touch upon ways of worship in the narrower sense, and are beginning to consider the theology of worship in connection with its practice. We have noted how the Church has always in its worship sought to embody the christological truths which we are endeavouring to set forth. Thus the liturgy has always been seen as the proclamation of the Word of God, and in particular the first part of the liturgy has been given over almost exclusively to the solemn reading of Scripture, and to scriptural homily. The so-called Mass of the Catechumens, frequently called today the Liturgy of the Word, is a sustained proclamation of the Word, through the reading of Scripture lessons, originally from the Old Testament as well as from the Epistles and Gospels, and through the sermon based upon them. This first part of the liturgy, the Christian synagogue service, does not stand alone. The Divine Office, to which we have just referred, extends the scriptural element from the main eucharistic celebration into the rest of the day and week, and provides for every day and time its means of hearing the Word and sharing in Christ's response.

It is however rather to the churches which came most strongly under the influence of the sixteenth-century Reformation, than to the ancient Church, or to the churches of "Catholic" tradition today, that we must look for the application of this same rich theology of the Word to the sermon. To exalt the sermon is not necessarily to depreciate the sacrament, or indeed any other of the forms of proclamation which the liturgy embodies. Conversely, to hold a high doctrine of the sacrament need not oblige us to hold a low doctrine of the sermon. The main theological contentions which have been engaging our attention are fully consonant with a high doctrine of both. The sermon should be seen as complementary to the sacrament, as being, like the sacrament, a form of Christ's gracious activity towards us.

No doubt it is true that it is far easier in the case of the sermon to offer a stone where the congregation sought the living bread. Perhaps this tragedy would happen less frequently if the Church had given as much attention to the question of the validity of the preached Word as it has to that of the sacraments. It is undeniable that in churches whose sacraments are by traditional standards unquestionably valid, preaching is too often offered which can be called valid only by stretching charity to the point of a certain disregard of the truth. Where the sermon is best understood, the materials exist for a reasonably precise theology of its validity, though this terminology might be somewhat uncongenial to the churches in question.

The preacher is the servant of the Word. His sermon puts at Christ's disposal the living language of the present day, with its associations with the everyday life of the congregation. It permits Christ to preach His Word through the mouth of the contemporary Church, as He has already through the Apostolic Church. But the sermon can truly be Christ's word only if it remains in continuity with the witness of the Apostles. The sermon will be valid only if it is both scriptural, and in the proper sense of the word, traditional, that is, it continues into the present-day life of the Church the Apostolic Tradition, the witness to the revelation in Christ which the original Apostles handed down to the Church, and which the Church has handed down after them from generation to generation. Thus the Church is responsible, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for the orthodoxy of the human testimony that is offered to Christ as the vehicle of His Word. Dogmatic theology is the necessary means to the orthodoxy of the Church's testimony, but Christ alone can take up the speech and language of man, however orthodox, into the Word which is Himself, and cause it to be uttered

with the power of His living presence. None the less, the Church which endeavours to be faithful to what has been committed to it has no reason to doubt the faithfulness of Christ in fulfilling at this point also His promise: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Does our christological understanding of the essence of worship point perhaps to the Reformed preaching service as the purest example of Christian worship? Here the idea of the proclamation of the Word is the determining concept. Worship is seen as the encounter between the living Lord and His Church through the Word, as the Word is read in Scripture and preached in the sermon, and the congregation makes the response, elicited by the Word, in "songs of praise" and in prayers of thanksgiving and penitence, usually formulated by the minister. Evidently we have to do here with something worthy of the deepest respect on the theological level, however disappointing to the expectations which its theology raises the Reformed service may sometimes be in practice. Such a service cannot possibly be in intention, even if as far as the laity is concerned it can become in practice, a mere gathering to hear a star preacher, or to be uplifted by words of comfort that have man and not God for their centre. We are rather to see here the immense solemnity of Christ's gathering of His sheep by the Word out of "this naughty world". No Christian church, and no activity of such a church, can finally be assessed except in the light of its profoundest theological intention, and its best practice; its decadence may at most give us a clue to a certain onesidedness in that basic theology.

Thus we may offer a christological critique of this form of worship, which so resolutely sets out to take seriously the contentions we have in our turn been examining in this chapter, in full sympathy with that attempt. At the same time it is proper to point out that the present-day preaching service does not realize the intentions of the Reformers themselves. For they saw, as clearly as the ancient Church, the way in which word and sacrament were intended to complement one another. It was their endeavour to restore the unity of word and sacrament in a service which should contain both the preaching of the Word and the reception of the sacrament by the whole congregation. The preaching service so common today, either in its Anglican form, as set in a part of the Divine Office, or in its Lutheran or Reformed version normally set in a freer or more "liturgical" adaptation of the first part of the ancient liturgy itself, is a torso. The intentions which underlie the preaching service would have been far more richly and profoundly realized, if the wishes of the Reformers themselves could have been

put into practice, as indeed is today at least beginning to happen in all these traditions, and the Sunday service had always included the celebration of the Eucharist.

The proclamation of the Word would have witnessed far more adequately to Christ, in whom the opposition of word and deed, so familiar to us, does not exist, if it had been expressed both in preaching and in the sacrament. Our incorporation into the response of Christ would have been far more clearly displayed if it had always been embodied in the act of receiving Holy Communion. Instead, concentration was focused upon the sermon, while the sacrament was relegated to solemn and indeed truly corporate, but excessively infrequent, celebration. Thus all but the most theologically minded acquired a verbalistic conception of the Word, and the Church's response was divorced, in thought at least, from Christ's. The neglect, and in some cases abandonment, of the Divine Office was also in part responsible both for this separation, and for the fact that men lost sight of Christ's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in His propitiatory work, and came to think of that too in an excessively individualistic way, which might in its turn have also been corrected by more frequent celebration of the sacrament, in which it is made clear that we receive Christ's grace as a community. If a congregation has nothing to do but hear sermons and prayers from the minister, and to sing hymns which have been divorced in theology and outlook from the objective and corporate liturgy, it is not surprising that it remains a congeries of individuals.

Only a rich and many-sided Christology, applied to the details of worship, will restore this tradition to the intentions of its founders, or embody in actual worship the profound doctrines of its contemporary theologians. Unfortunately these theologians themselves, many of whom are leading the way for all Christendom in theological reconstruction at the dogmatic level, are, when it comes to worship, sometimes sadly blind to the importance and to the spiritual and theological depth of the liturgy, and in consequence out of sympathy with the attempts of liturgical reformers in their own communions to restore a form of worship which will more adequately reflect the christological pattern. We ought to hope, therefore, if we wish the Reformed tradition well, for a rapprochement between its theologians and its liturgical reformers, from which both might benefit. The christological work of the theologians might serve as a wise guide to the detailed reforms that are going on, while theology in its turn might thus be enriched from the living waters of the liturgy.

IV

EUCCHARISTIA: MAN'S RESPONSE

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.

The Book of Common Prayer.

CHRIST IS BOTH the Word of God to man, and the perfect response of man to God. His response to the Father's love is made both as God the Son and as the Son of Man, the new Adam. His response, made in our humanity, and on our behalf, is therefore the foundation of ours. His sacrifice of thanksgiving, which is His whole life, became in the end a bloody sacrifice of reconciliation. By that reconciliation we have been brought back to the Father, and, regaining our sonship in Him, are enabled to offer in Him our own sacrifice of thanksgiving. Yet our sacrifice adds nothing to His, for His is complete and perfect; rather is our sacrifice included already within His, and when the Church offers to the Father her spiritual sacrifice, her reasonable service, it is His sacrifice which is offered in another mode: what is fulfilled in the Head begins to take place also in the members of the Body.

We have already said of Christ's human response that it is the *latreia* of the Suffering Servant of God, using the Greek word to indicate a region of life in which worship and service merge in a total self-oblation. We have also seen how this *latreia* comes most clearly into view at the Last Supper and on the Cross: in the Last Supper, where the thanksgiving of the Jew for creation blends with the proclamation of the fulfilling sacrifice of the New Covenant; on the Cross, when that intention is acted out in blood, and the New Covenant is sealed in the death of the Son of God. And we have seen how the worship of the earliest Christians is best characterized as *eucharistia*, the fulfilment in thanksgiving of Jesus' command: "Do this in remembrance of me."

We shall now suggest that this same word, *eucharistia*, will stand very well as a summary of the whole of man's response to the initiative of God's love, both in Christ and in us, and that it can be understood in

such a way as to take up into itself all the other ways of thinking of that response which we have touched on, especially *latreia* and sacrifice. It is not accidental that this is the word which came to be used, not long after the New Testament period, for the principal Christian service, which originated in the actions of our Lord at the Last Supper and His Passion on the Cross. Thus by *eucharistia* we shall mean both the Eucharist itself, and also that whole movement of thanksgiving towards God the Creator and Redeemer which ought to characterize the members of Christ.

While it may be argued that *latreia* might represent even more clearly the aspect of disinterested adoration which is the very summit of that movement, *eucharistia* shows more clearly what we have been at pains to maintain, that Christian worship is a response; it is the thanksgiving of the redeemed. Nor need the idea of thanksgiving exclude that highest form of it, when we thank God not merely for His goodness to us, but for Himself, simply for the fact that He is what He is. When we reach that point, as we do in the liturgy, adoration and thanksgiving are indistinguishable; but we shall best understand our adoration if we approach it through thanksgiving, if we keep in mind that we are to adore God revealed, One who has Himself taken the initiative in approaching us, who has indeed created within us the worship that is His due, and in the offering of which our own true life consists.

Thanksgiving is the act by which man acknowledges his dependence upon another: it is therefore the fundamental acknowledgment of the Creator by the creature. The virtue of creatureliness, which von Hügel rightly prized almost above all others, is inseparable from thanksgiving. When we cease to be thankful, we assert either our independence of God, or the inadequacy of the bounty of God, and usually both at once. That is why the saint gives thanks without ceasing, even for what other men would regard as disasters and misfortunes, and in contrast to the unthankful, asserts his joyful recognition of the love of God "at all times and in all places". It is a deep instinct of the worshipping mind that thanksgiving must be costly if it is to express any depth of gratitude. However costly it may become, it can never equal the bounty of Him who first loved us. He gave us not only all good things, but our very being; to return to Him tokens from among those good things is something, may even be much; but in the end only the return to Him of our whole being can express the truth of our relationship to Him. That is why thanksgiving is inseparable from sacrifice, and sacrifice from *latreia*, total service in the doing of God's will, even unto death.

All this is true of Christ, more true of Him indeed than it could be of any saint, for He was totally free from that unthankfulness which is of the essence of sin. From the first moment of His conscious life, He was all thanksgiving to the Heavenly Father, for He saw His kindness and goodness in everything; to His pure vision, the whole creation poured in upon Him the unmeasurable love of the Father. And so He returned to the Father from within the creation a total thanksgiving that echoed the thanksgiving which is His life in the Blessed Trinity as the Eternal Word;¹ in constant and acknowledged dependence on the Father He lived out a perfect human thanksgiving. That thanksgiving was the offering of His whole self in obedience, a glad obedience joyfully returned to the One who had given Him everything. We are not to think of Christ’s obedience as anything grim and grudging, costly though it always and increasingly was. We are indeed too often misled by the phrase “man of sorrows”, and are only too apt to think of Him as without the gaiety and humour that thankfulness imparts to the saints we have known in the Church. Absolutely speaking, Christ’s obedience and thanksgiving need not have been tinged with sorrow, need not have led Him to the Cross. He was a living sacrifice, and on His own account He had no need to be a dying one. It was our sin that caused him to be “acquainted with grief”, that made it necessary for Him, if He would live out His thanksgiving to the end, to perfect His obedience in the drinking of the bitter cup of the Passion.

As He comes to the end of His life, in the same night that He was betrayed, we find Him still giving thanks, but now the meaning of that thanksgiving has plumbed the depths. As so often before, at the Last Supper He utters again the well-known words of thanksgiving over bread and wine, receiving them as always from the hand of God “who brings forth bread from the earth”, “who creates the fruit of the vine”; but this time He does not share in them Himself,² but gives them to His disciples, saying: “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you.”³ We cannot separate the blessing of the bread and wine, the traditional thanksgiving over the good things given by God, from the words of interpretation (as Jeremias calls them), as if the former were the meaningless repetition of an empty formula,

¹ cf. Bouyer, *Le Mystère Pascal*, pp. 122ff.

² Such seems to be the implication of St. Luke’s account, at least as far as the wine is concerned. See Jeremias, *op. cit.* pp. 163ff.

³ Luke 22: 19f. R.V.

and only the new words expressed the real intention of Jesus. If the evangelists do not record the words of thanksgiving, it is because they are so familiar, not because their content is not important. We must suppose that Jesus meant what He said as much in the one case as in the other. If then He meant that the bread and the wine were His body and blood, offered as the sacrifice of the new Covenant, on behalf of His disciples, to whom He gave them away, He also meant that it was in supreme thanksgiving to God for the gift of body and blood, of human existence in fullness, as offerable to God, that He gave them.

Jesus' thanksgiving to God for life comes to its supreme moment, therefore, in the giving away of life back to its Giver, for the sake of other men. His words, taken in their context, mean that He is consecrating Himself to be a sacrifice: He is giving to His forthcoming death an interpretation which it would otherwise have lacked, since He goes to His death almost in silence on the morrow. Moreover, since when He speaks, He speaks the creative word of God, He makes His death to be what He says it will be, just as, for our sacrament, He makes the bread and wine to be what He says they are. The Last Supper is an act of self-consecration to the death upon the Cross. We might even dare to say that He consecrates Himself by thanksgiving, as all things were blessed by thanksgiving in Israel. At any rate, the Johannine account of the Last Supper, while it does not mention the words of institution (perhaps, as Jeremias suggests, out of a reserve which will serve to protect them from profanation by the heathen), provides us instead with the long prayer in which this interpretation of the Last Supper as self-consecration to the Cross is made abundantly clear.¹

The Eucharist, accordingly, is in the first place a thanksgiving, but a thanksgiving which is also a sacrifice. We need not think of these two elements in opposition, as Christians once did. Our recovered understanding of eschatology makes it unnecessary for us to pose a dilemma here: either the Eucharist is a thanksgiving for the finished work of Christ, or it is the repetition of His sacrifice; for us, to recognize in the Eucharist the sacrifice of the New Covenant, the sacrifice that is Christ's perfect thanksgiving in the giving away of life, need not be thought of as in the least degree implying the repetition of Calvary. If the Eucharist contains Christ's sacrifice of thanksgiving, not repeated, but brought by Him to our Table in all its living reality and efficacy, it is also our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, because we are His Body. It is ours in

¹ See the authors cited, and also the present writer's article, "The Eucharistic Sacrifice: a Live Issue", in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Dec. 1955.

two senses: His sacrifice is ours, because it was made on our behalf, and in our place; it can therefore be offered by us in Him as man’s perfect worship; and it is also the means of our own offering of praise and thanksgiving for creation and redemption.

The Eucharist is therefore the central and typical act of Christian worship, and we should not be far amiss if we saw in it the essence of worship, for here above all in the life of the Church is Christ’s perfect worship, presented to us in order that we may share in its offering to the Father, and be taken up through it into His fulfilled response of thanksgiving and service. As we shall see, the Eucharist ought not to be thought of apart from the proclamation of the Word, for Christ is Word as well as response; but if we understand the Eucharist rightly, we are entitled to say that here the essence of worship, Christ as the true Jacob’s Ladder, is sacramentally embodied for the Church, and here the members of the Church are themselves caught up into that essence of worship, and fulfil their true calling, and the purpose of their creation.

The Church is a royal priesthood. Because it is the Body of our great High Priest, who is also the Messianic King, it shares with Him in His fulfilment of all that priesthood meant in Israel. He was not Himself a priest of the Levitical line. That shows us that there is something allegorical, as the Fathers (following the Epistle to the Hebrews) taught, about the Levitical priesthood of the Old Covenant, which in the literal sense disappears in the fulfilment. The Sacrifice of the New Covenant differs from the sacrifices of bulls and goats in the identity of Priest and Victim. He offers Himself: he is Priest and Sacrifice in one. For Christians, sacrifice cannot mean the offering of something other than oneself. In the primary sense, there is no Christian sacrifice other than Christ’s, which we have in the Eucharist. Christ is therefore also the true Priest of the eucharistic offering, since it is in fact no other than the sacrifice of Calvary.

Should we draw the conclusion that every man is also his own priest, since he alone can offer himself? If we do, we shall fall once again into a Pelagian misunderstanding of the relation of our worship to Christ’s. Let us repeat: it is not the case that Christ provides the Word, and we the response; He has also fulfilled on man’s behalf the response to the Word He brought and was. When we respond in the offering of ourselves, our offering is made in the Body of Christ, and is incorporated into the offering of Christ; conversely, our self-offering has reality only because it is the self-offering of Christ in us. Our own personal self-offering is not our private property; it does not belong to us at all (in

any exclusive sense); it belongs to Christ in His Body. He is the High Priest of all offering, for all is in the last resort His.

There is therefore no such thing as individual priesthood in the Church. All our priesthood is corporate, because it is Christ's in His Body. As the Church has recognized, this does not preclude the setting apart of individuals to represent Christ's priesthood for the sake of the whole Body, to bring to a focus the royal priesthood of all, and also to show how the priesthood of the many is dependent on the priesthood of the One. Even where one priest stands in the name of Christ in front of His people, his priesthood is not to be thought of apart from theirs, because it cannot exist apart from Christ's. It is not his own, any more than theirs is, but is the sign of the one High Priest, reigning over all the members of His Body. The ministerial priest gathers up the priesthood of the whole Body, and exhibits its dependence on Christ.

For much the same reasons, the element of offering in the Eucharist, expressed in offertory and consecration prayer, cannot be separated from the reception of communion, or reception from offering. There is, once again, a false dilemma in the suggestion that if the Eucharist is the gift of God to man it cannot be a sacrifice; but as the ancient Church understood, it is also a false understanding of sacrifice that supposes it can be divorced from communion. The Eucharist sets forth Christ as Word and response: in both respects He is the gift of God to man. His response is given to us, in order that we may have something to give back to God. The grace of communion is precisely to be taken up into the Body's sharing of the self-offering of the Head, to be delivered from the separateness of unthankfulness into the thanksgiving of the redeemed. But unless by the grace of the sacrament we are so taken up, we have not been made to share in Christ's sacrifice. We do not fully offer if we do not communicate. We cannot offer Him, in the sense of sharing in His Priesthood, if we do not offer ourselves, and that we can do only by being incorporated with Him in His own offering. For us, sacrifice and communion are one.

This understanding of the Church's worship, as made in union with Christ her Head, has the further consequence that there is in the final analysis only one liturgy, which is the liturgy of the whole of the redeemed, the Body of Christ giving thanks as one Body in the Head. If the liturgy in all its forms is the prayer of Christ in His Body, we are wrong to think of any act of worship, and above all any Eucharist, as being merely the worship of the particular congregation which is assembled to offer it. Christian worship is radically corporate. It is

corporate not only in the sense that it unites the individual members of each congregation into a common prayer, a single shared act of worship, but also in the sense that each congregation has no business to think of itself as offering a particular worship of its own, apart from the whole of the rest of the Body; rather is it the task of each congregation to represent locally the one offering of the whole of redeemed humanity in Christ. The words of the service ought to make this clear, as in the traditional liturgies they do; and it ought not to be a matter of complaint that the worship of the whole Church has little room for the specific needs of a self-conscious particular congregation.

From this same point of vantage, we can see how the unity of the whole Church in Christ the High Priest sheds further light on the continuity of the Church, which we have already begun to consider. If the Church has its continuity in the Word, it is no less true that it finds its continuity in the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, and even in the ministry, which represents, as we have seen, Christ’s Priesthood in His Body. For, as we have just noted, the grace of Holy Communion is the unity of the Church, the taking up of each member, with His self-offering, into Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and for ever. If there is only one offering, only one liturgy, there is equally evidently only one Church to offer it, throughout the world and down the ages. The Church is complete in Christ, who “is the fullness of him that filleth all in all”;¹ its prolongation in space and time is simply the incorporation of men into the fullness which has been achieved in Christ.

The ministry, which gathers up the corporateness of each local church into oneness in Christ, is also the sign of the world-wide unity and continuity of the Church. In the present divided state of Christendom, that sign cannot be fully given. But in the undivided Church, the fact that each Bishop had been consecrated by his predecessors, and was in communion with his fellows throughout the world, spoke of a truth about the Body of Christ that nothing can ever undo, but that much can and does obscure from the world and from her members. The fact that lines of succession have been lost, that ministries do not recognize one another, that churches are not in communion with one another, though it cannot alter the fact that all who are taken up into Christ’s liturgy are taken up into one and the same offering, tragically obscures the nature of the Church as one Body in Christ, and leads very often to a similar obscuring of the truly corporate nature of worship. The Roman church, while it may not always seem to grasp the true nature

¹ Eph. 1: 22f.

of that unity in Christ, endeavours in a very vivid way to exhibit these truths in its Papacy and in its Latin liturgy, the same in essentials and often in details throughout the world. Even in these matters, in which we are so deeply divided from the Roman church, we do well to recognize how seriously the unity of the Church is taken there.

These great truths about our worship as *eucharistia*, as our response to the Word of God in Christ, are set forth in the second great part of the main Christian service, called sometimes the Mass of the Faithful, and at other times the liturgy of the sacrament. While this part of the service is also, as we have noted, a proclamation of the Word, since the sacraments are *verba visibilia*, it may be regarded in a particular way as the embodiment of man's eucharistic response. We have seen that the response is given in the Word; we have also noted that the mystery is proclaimed in the sacrament; nevertheless it is natural, while remembering that, to regard proclamation as appropriated in some degree to the reading of Scripture and the sermon, and the incorporation of man in the response of Christ as appropriated to the sacrament. Here the Church is joined to Christ's *eucharistia*, and makes her own in union with His. His sacrifice, made present in the eschatological *anamnesis*, is offered by the "whole Christ", head and members, and the members of the Church are themselves offered in union with Christ. Thus adequate eucharist is made to God, and the Church is filled with the power to carry that eucharistic response into every area of life.

The traditional order of the liturgy makes this clear by causing the Church to imitate the eucharistic action of Christ at the Last Supper. At the offertory the celebrant takes bread and wine (the actions concerning the two elements are now brought together, with the disappearance, at some time in the first century, of the meal which intervened between the bread and the cup), and blesses them, as Christ did, by thanksgiving. That thanksgiving begins, as the Jewish thanksgivings did, with a dialogue between celebrant and people: "Let us give thanks unto our Lord God"; "It is meet and right so to do". Then the celebrant takes up the great prayer, beginning with the Preface (a misleading translation of a Latin word that meant a prayer said in a loud voice), in which thanks are offered to God, on the Jewish model, for creation and redemption, leading up to the account of the Last Supper in which the sacrament was instituted, and to the commemoration of the passion, resurrection, ascension and second coming of Christ. Then the elements, now united to the one sacrifice of Christ of which they are the signs, are offered to God in praise and thanksgiving, and the blessing culminates

in the great doxology, in which God is praised for creation and redemption through Jesus Christ, by whom His mighty works were done. The third action is the breaking of the bread itself, which traditionally stood as a separate act at the end of the great eucharistic prayer, but is often nowadays transferred to the institution narrative, where it does not really belong.¹ Finally the consecrated elements are distributed to the people in Communion. Thus the celebrant does what Christ did, taking bread and wine at the Offertory, blessing them in the great eucharistic prayer, breaking bread at the Fraction, and giving them to the assembled disciples in Communion.

The Catholic tradition in the Church has always seen the Eucharist as the central point of worship, the most characteristic act of *latreia*, in which the essence of worship is most explicitly expressed. The main Sunday service has always been the Eucharist, and in the West at least the daily Eucharist has been common from at least early medieval times. The Eucharist has not stood alone: it has been surrounded by other devotions, notably the Divine Office, to which we have referred in the previous chapter, and also by other liturgical and semi-liturgical devotions, such as (in the West) Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Rosary. But the centrality of the Eucharist has kept Catholic thought and practice about worship anchored to the self-oblation of Christ as the essence of all worship. Sacrifice, particularized in adoration and intercession, with a corresponding emphasis on the doing of God’s will from moment to moment in daily life, has been the keynote of all Catholic devotion. Thus the devotional life of the Catholic has been kept from moralism and Pelagianism, for the eucharistic sacrifice has reminded him over and over again that only the total self-oblation of Christ Himself can ever be adequate to the glory of God, and that he himself can do nothing to praise God in his own life except by allowing Christ to praise God in him. Catholic sanctity is typically union with the worshipping Christ; the great contemplative orders have always centred their life around the demanding ideal of the disinterested worship of God in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

It may be thought however that the Catholic tradition has not always succeeded in bringing out sufficiently clearly the other side of the truth, that all our worship is but our response to the self-giving of God in revelation and redemption. If Catholics, Roman, Orthodox and Anglican, have always seen very clearly that all worship has a christological

¹ For a clear exposition of this point, see E. L. Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, 1955, Chapter III.

basis, they have tended to under-emphasize the downward movement of the divine charity, and to concentrate upon the upward movement of human response (however well they have understood this) in such a way that it has been at times possible to forget that it is a response. It has been too easy for Catholics to assimilate the sacrifice of Christ to sacrifice in general, to that questionable movement of fallen human religion, which is never far from idolatry, and to under-stress the Covenant relationship, which made even the Jewish sacrifices a genuine response to the divine initiative. Worship has been too easily regarded as a natural human activity, and not the fruit of the redeeming work of God. A consequence of this has been a devaluation of the liturgy of the Word in the main service of the Church. Though the Scripture lessons have been treated with great liturgical solemnity, and regarded in a very realistic way as the Word of God, the content of that Word has sometimes been swallowed up in reverence for the mystical presence of Christ in His Word in the Gospel, so that reverence could be in danger of replacing obedience. The loss of the sermon as an element in proclamation has also contributed to Catholic failure to recognize the strangeness of the Word, reversing human thoughts and imaginations, and to the tendency to assimilate the Gospel to human ways of thinking.

A christological critique of Catholic ways of worship will not therefore seek to remove the great stress upon the Eucharist as the main service, which dates from the earliest times, nor upon the sacrificial element therein, which comes out of the very heart of Christ's own life. It will rather seek to balance this by suggesting to Catholic liturgical reformers that their attempts to restore the proclamatory aspect of the liturgy itself, so that its message may speak vividly and clearly to the people of the sacrifice of Christ and our participation in it, will not be complete unless there is a balancing emphasis upon the Word, both as given in Scripture and as preached by the living Church today. It will also lead to a suggestion, directed especially perhaps to Anglican liturgical reformers, that while it is a great gain to restore the centrality of the Eucharist as the fundamental corporate service of the people of God Sunday by Sunday, neglect of the Divine Office, with its biblical content, will cause the Eucharist itself to be misunderstood, as a consecration of man's natural life, rather than as a gift of the new creation in Christ.

The danger in the liturgically reformed parish communion is probably not precisely, as is so often suggested, a loss of mystery, or neglect of the sacrificial element in worship; it is rather that sacrifice will be

interpreted too humanistically, that it will be thought that our daily life is fit to be offered to God, or even that God is satisfied with a ritual oblation of representative tokens of our daily life without the daily payment of the cost of sharing in Christ’s passion. Here the recovery of the prophetic Word might be a better recall to the true christological pattern than a return to medieval ceremonial, which is almost as capable of being misunderstood as the current over-emphasis on the offertory. It will indeed be a disaster from the point of view of the christological pattern in worship, if the restoration of the parish communion leads to the disappearance of Mattins and Evensong from the devotional life of the average Anglican lay person, however onesided may have been the previous emphasis upon them.

Strangely enough, we may find ourselves repeating in respect of Catholics the wish that our study of Protestant worship led us to formulate, that there may not be too great a cleavage between theologians and liturgical reformers; but in this case our emphasis will be a little different. If Protestant theologians need to be brought more closely in touch with the traditional pattern of the liturgy, Catholic liturgical reformers would benefit greatly from more acquaintance with the theology of the Word, in which Protestant theologians excel.

V

THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
(Rom. 8: 15.)

No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12: 3.)

IT IS SOMETIMES supposed that there is an opposition to be recognized between a theology that is founded in Christology, and one which affords room for the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus at Lund, when it had been agreed that the new path in Faith and Order must be to consider the Church always in relation to Jesus Christ, it was suggested from the floor that a corresponding reference to the Holy Spirit should be added, and that was indeed done by a large majority. None the less, the new resolution really added nothing to the content of the proposition as it had previously stood; for it is impossible to conceive of the Church as the Body of Christ without constantly remembering that that Body is animated by the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus Christ Himself performed all His mighty works in the power of the Holy Spirit, as He Himself testified,¹ and at the last "offered himself without spot in the eternal Spirit".²

Conversely, if we really start from the Holy Spirit, and not from some lying spirit of illusion, we shall be led at once to Jesus Christ. If "no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit",³ that is because it is the work of the Spirit to bear witness to Christ,⁴ so much so that the confession of Jesus as Lord is an infallible mark of the presence of the Holy Spirit: without the Spirit that confession would be impossible; even in the absence of any more obviously supernatural result of the Spirit's presence, it can be confidently affirmed of anyone who can make this confession of Jesus. And this is because the Spirit does not "speak from himself . . . he shall glorify [Christ], for he shall take of [Christ's], and shall declare it. . . ."⁵ This attachment of the Spirit's work in the world to the revelatory and redemptive work of Christ does not

¹ Matt. 12: 28.

² Heb. 9: 14.

³ 1 Cor. 12: 3.

⁴ John 15: 26.

⁵ John 16: 13, 14.

make that work of the Spirit unnecessary, or unworthy of our notice; but it does define at once for us the nature of that work, and helps us not to look for it in the wrong place. We may add that it does not, for that matter, necessarily close the discussion between Eastern and Western Christians about the procession of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, for even the Easterns are agreed that in the economy of the Spirit in the world, He is to be recognized always as working with and in relation to the incarnate Word.¹

If therefore it is impossible to understand the work of Christ, and to receive it as revelation and one's own salvation, except through the work of the Holy Spirit in one, it is also impossible to understand the work of the Spirit, and to know it for God's work, except in the fact that it reveals Christ to us as God's Word. For not all "spiritual" experience is to be attributed to the Holy Spirit. There are many "spirits" which may come to possess our minds, even in the act of prayer and worship. There have been many in Christendom who have been led astray by a false spiritualism, by supposed revelations, by the conviction that they had found a way more spiritual than that of the organized Church, with its dogmas, its sinful membership, its questionable association with the world, its insistence upon the outward and formal, upon the sacramental and corporate, before the inward and individual.

The New Testament gives us a touchstone by which we may judge all such "spiritual" insights, and know whether they come from God. The genuine work of the Holy Spirit is to exalt Christ as Lord, not to give some new revelation, but to guide us into all the truth by taking the things of Christ and showing them to us in His Divine light.² "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God" (1 John 4: 1ff.). John's especial concern was with the defence of the Incarnation against the gnostic spiritualizers; but we shall certainly not be false to his teaching if we apply the analogy, and see the relevance and force of his tests of the spirits to

¹ Vladimir Lossky, *Essai sur la Théologie Mystique de l'Eglise de l'Orient*, 1944, pp. 79-83, esp. p. 82 (E.T. *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 1957). It may be argued against the Easterns that it is dangerously speculative not to found our understanding of the being of God upon His acts in history. But this is a more complex question than the disciples of Karl Barth make it appear.

² See 1 Cor. 12: 3; John 16: 13f., already quoted.

those who reject the "unspirituality" of organized religion, of the traditional Church with its links with the historic Incarnation, and its "incarnate" spirituality. To consider the Holy Spirit in the light of our confession of Christ as Lord will go far to save us from such misunderstandings of His real work. It is not therefore lack of appreciation of the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit which leads us to subordinate our discussion of that work to the Christology upon which we have so far dwelt; it is rather a concern that when we do come to speak of the Holy Spirit we speak of Him as He really is, and not of some human spirituality to which the Incarnation with the Cross is an offence.

All this has its relevance to our discussion of the meaning of worship. We have sought to show that Christ is the essence of worship, that Christian worship is the descent of the divine charity in the Word, and the ascent of man's response through that same Incarnate Word who has Himself fulfilled it before us. We shall not, however, understand that affirmation rightly if we conclude from it that either our hearing of that Word, or our participation in that response, could possibly take place without the work of the Spirit. If the objective basis of our worship is the work of Christ, its subjective basis is the work of the Spirit in the individual members of the Church, enabling them to hear Christ's word as God's Word, and to participate personally in His response to the Father. From this point of view we think of the Church as the spiritual Temple, built of living stones, which is at the same time the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit gives to each member of the Church the life which makes it possible for him to become a stone in that Temple, and so to be united in that one act of worship which is the response of the Word to the Father in the humanity which He took.

Thus our christological starting point necessarily leads us on to the affirmation of the full co-operation of the Spirit in every work of the Word. He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit; on Him the Spirit was poured out without measure, descending upon Him at His Baptism in the form of a dove; He was driven out by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted; by the Holy Spirit He cast out demons; He offered Himself to the Father in the Spirit; crucified, risen and ascended, He sent forth the Spirit to the waiting Church from the right hand of the Father; when, in obedience to the Apostolic Mission He had left to them, they preach the Word, He seals it with the Holy Spirit in the believer. If then in the liturgy the Word is proclaimed in Scripture, sermon and sacrament, we can only hear and receive that Word as a living reality by the power of the Holy Spirit. That is why

Christian worship so often begins with the invocation of the Holy Spirit: "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire. . . ."; "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee and worthily magnify thy Holy Name".¹ And even where that invocation is not explicitly made, the mere assembling together of the Church is the constitution of the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit. To take part in the liturgy is to be "in the Spirit".²

If the Word and the Spirit are always united, the Spirit giving power and reality to the proclamation of the Word, and giving to the hearers their capacity (not natural to them, for as Karl Barth so ruthlessly affirms, *homo non capax verbi Dei*) to "hear and receive" that Word, we must necessarily say that the same is true in the case of the sacrament, if only because the sacrament is *verbum visibile*. We ought to think of Christ's presence in the sacrament as a presence through the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit is the one who links us both with the first coming of Christ and with its final manifestation in the *Parousia*, of which he is the *aparche* and therefore the *arrhabon*, the first fruits and pledge.³ He is the eschatological link between the times, bringing both past and future into the present in the worship of the Church. It is therefore He who in the Eucharist brings the Passion and Resurrection of Christ out of the past into the present, in all their reality and efficacy.

The doctrine that we have enunciated is common to the Eastern Church and to the followers of John Calvin, though whether Calvin was consciously aware that his doctrine of the Real Presence had such links with that of the Orthodox Church I have not seen stated by the scholars. No doubt the two traditions understand these matters somewhat differently. Calvin will not find it easy to speak of a *metabole* or change in the elements. None the less, the connection is not without importance. The Eastern Church gives expression to this doctrine in the *Épiclesis* in the liturgy, which is held to effect consecration; thus the institution narrative, which in the West is believed to contain the "words of consecration", is in the Byzantine liturgy simply part of the great thanksgiving, though an exceptionally solemn part which is chanted aloud. It is no doubt in imitation of this, and not through the following of John Calvin, that the Scottish Liturgy⁴ teaches us to pray: "Send thy Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these thy gifts and creatures

¹ *The Book of Common Prayer*, Collect for Purity.

² Rev. 1: 10.

³ Rom. 8: 23; Eph. 1: 14; 2 Cor. 1: 22; 2 Cor. 5: 5.

⁴ See *Scottish Book of Common Prayer*, 1929.

of bread and wine, that being blessed and hallowed by his life-giving power, they may become the Body and Blood of thy most-dearly beloved Son."

The Western Church in general, as we have remarked, has associated the consecration with the words of Christ in the institution narrative and has on the whole avoided such precise language about the effect of consecration as that which we have quoted from the Scottish Liturgy. None the less, the idea of consecration by the Word, found in the Roman liturgy, and strongly asserted by Martin Luther, does not necessarily exclude the belief that the Holy Spirit co-operates with Christ in His sacramental work. For when the Word of God is thus spoken, there is no need for a specific invocation of the Holy Spirit to ensure His participation in the act of Christ. We cannot conceive of any act of His in which the Holy Spirit is not associated, both because all the external operations of the Trinity are undivided, and also because, as we have seen, the Spirit specifically takes part in the Incarnation and all the works arising from it.

When we turn to consider the work of the Holy Spirit in that part of our worship which is more particularly our response to the Word we may think in the first place not merely of the fact that faith is always a gift of grace, but of that specific response whereby we cry: "Abba Father." Karl Barth has striking words to say of this:

In a decisive passage Paul mentions only one thing, in which for him every thing is obviously contained: in the Holy Spirit, and so as the children of God, we cry *κράζομεν*, 'Αββᾶ, ὁ Πατήρ (Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 6). It is marvellously, yet of a surety not accidentally, the same cry which the Gospel narrative (Mark 14: 36) puts in the mouth of Jesus in Gethsemane as He prays. So then, in this form, the Son of God is the prototype of the sonship of believers. This Christ the children of God have "put on". This child, sinful man, can meet this Father, the holy God, as a child its father, nowhere else than at the place where the only begotten Son of God bore and bore away his sins. Man's being there does not exactly constitute his reconciliation—reconciliation consists in what the Son of God did and suffered for us—but in it the reconciliation is completed in him, it constitutes his participation in the reconciliation that came to pass in Christ. This is having the Holy Spirit.¹

Having the Holy Spirit makes us sons in the Son, *fili in Filio*, to quote a phrase in which Mersch sums up an important element in the

¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I, 1, (E.T., 1949), p. 524.

teaching of Scripture and the Fathers about the Church.¹ We participate by adoption in that sonship which the Word has by nature, and so we become the children of God.² The love of the Father for the Son is poured out upon us, and we share in the perfect and equally loving response of the Son to the Father. In the Holy Spirit we enter the very life of the Trinity, and become, in the phrase of the Greek Fathers, Gods by grace.³ And though this awe-inspiring and ineffable reality will only be fully apprehensible by us in the state of glory, still it is a reality from the moment of our Baptism, and we can make it our own in the liturgy and in all prayer, for then above all we exercise it. As we shall see, it is this truth, that we are "now the children of God",⁴ that gives its special intimacy and *parrhesia*, freedom of utterance, to the intercourse of Christians with their heavenly Father, though it should not lead them to forget who it is who is their Father, and so to address Him in a way which is lacking in reverence for His divine Majesty.

From this point of view, we may now see the Church in a third aspect, as constituted by the Spirit. The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit, the spirit-bearing Community. In its earliest form in the West, the third article of the Creed ran: I believe in the Holy Spirit in the Holy Church. We may perhaps associate this truth about the Church, as coming to reality in the response to the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit, with that view of the Church, made famous in Karl Barth's contribution to the Amsterdam volume, *The Universal Church in God's Design*,⁵ which sees it not as a substance but as an *event*, not as a being but as a happening.

It is not easy to see from Karl Barth's exposition of this view in the Amsterdam volume how he can relate such a doctrine of the Church to the Pauline doctrine of the Body of Christ, continuing in history, as the Church has always understood it, or how he can evade the caricature of the position that sees the Church, in his view, as flashing in and out of existence like a neon light. However, it would be open to Barth to reply that after all it is not the neon tube which flashes in and out of existence, but the light it gives. So in the case of the Church, the structural side of the Church persists, but without the *hic et nunc* action of the

¹ E. Mersch, *La Théologie du Corps Mystique*, 1949, II, ch. xiii, p. 49.

² 1 John 3: 1.

³ Lossky, *op. cit.* pp. 168, 122, etc.; cf. E. L. Mascall, *Via Media*, 1956, pp. 121ff.

⁴ 1 John 3: 2.

⁵ 1948.

Spirit it is but an ecclesiastical shell, whatever its orthodoxy and lineage. This we can readily admit, for there is no reason to believe that the Church is in fact ever deserted by the Spirit who was poured out upon her at Pentecost. It may be proper, if we can accept a certain philosophical actualism, very dear to present-day Protestant thought—we may be pardoned for wondering if Barth has not here fallen victim to a subtle kind of natural theology—to think of that grace of the Holy Spirit as coming to actuality at specific moments, in the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments, in the actual prayer of the believers. But if we carry this actualism too far, we shall forget Christ's promise: "Lo, I am with you *always*."

A view of the Church which starts from the Holy Spirit will generate its own kind of worship, like the other two views we have considered. Here the emphasis will be on the *parrhesia* of the children of God, and upon the spontaneity, freedom and reality which the Spirit imparts to their prayer. Thus the Free Churches, which have insisted on the power of the Spirit to raise up fellowships of believers, wherever the traditional Church has ceased to manifest (at least in their eyes) the vitality of the Spirit-bearing community, have almost always in their public worship, as well as in less formal gatherings for prayer, insisted on the freedom of the Spirit to build up the congregation in worship, and above all to express their prayers through the mouth of the minister without the binding influence of a prayer-book or set liturgy. While they have not insisted (in general, though the Quakers here as in most matters would be an exception) on the leader leaving all to the inspiration of the moment, holding that the Spirit may also work in the preparation of the prayer, they have not wished any irrevocable decisions on the content, or even the form, of the prayers to be taken until the actual moment of worship, in the fellowship of the Spirit. In this they somewhat resemble the early Church, where in the second century at least it seems to have been the Bishop's duty and privilege to compose his own eucharistic prayer, according to the traditional model, and it would have been expected of him that he should exercise the gift of prayer by finding the actual words on the occasion of the offering of the liturgy.

The Free Churches, in accordance with their Puritan ancestry, have been prepared to sacrifice much to this actuality of which Karl Barth also speaks. In order that the Church might be an event, in order that the Holy Spirit might be manifestly among the worshippers, they have been prepared to some degree at least to give up beauty, dignity, and even order in the Church service, and certainly a great deal of con-

tinuity with the past. At the present time they too have been experiencing the influence of the contemporary revival in the theology and practice of worship, though the term "liturgical movement" should not perhaps be extended to cover what is going on among them. But however that may be, the Free Churches are at present offering their own critique of their past, and claiming for themselves a greater share in the liturgical riches of Christian tradition. They are evidently ceasing to feel that the presence of the Holy Spirit in worship must necessarily be manifested by the particular form of actualism that free prayer by the minister used to display. They are becoming prepared to use traditional collects and other prayers, to make use of prayers previously composed and published in books of prayers for use in public worship, and they are stressing that their service, even when clothed in free prayer, has an intelligible and theologically grounded order, that the congregation should know and expect to find followed.

Our own critique of Free Church and Quaker worship, in the light of our christological approach, must certainly start with a recognition of the justification of the freedom of this type of church service in the theology of the Holy Spirit which we have been considering. Free prayer, or even a free order of worship, is best seen as a sign of the real presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. But we may question whether it is strictly necessary for the sign to be given in this way, or whether the truth of the Holy Spirit's presence is not an abiding one even when no special effort is made to give a sign of it at all, as in the traditional eucharistic liturgy of the West. We see no reason to believe that the Holy Spirit is more absent from a Low Mass without sermon than from a Free Church morning service. We ought to learn to see the action of the Holy Spirit both in the liturgical proclamation itself, and also in the inspiring of the worshippers to the fullest possible participation in the prayer of Christ in the liturgy. In this way the traditional liturgy will be seen as every bit as much a liturgy of the Holy Spirit as is the "free" type of worship, and since it is eucharistic, in less danger of losing its christological roots. That loss must in all seriousness be suspected in Quaker worship, where the abandonment of the incarnational elements in worship is so deliberate and complete that it is difficult to give any theological account of the Quaker meeting and the theology on which it rests, that will bring it clearly and decisively within the stream of Christian orthodoxy. However, the Spirit is free, and if He chooses, He can certainly do His work through the Quaker meeting.

Moreover, it seems necessary that the kind of witness to the freedom

and vitality of the Holy Spirit, and to the *parrhesia* of the children of God, which the traditional Free Church and Quaker meetings made, should have some place in the fullness of Christian worship. We may regret its divorce from the traditional liturgy, if we have been enabled to understand the inwardness of that form of worship, as Free Churchmen evidently have not, in most cases. We may consider that the theological and spiritual dangers of a permanent diet of freedom in worship are greater than those of a permanent use of a set liturgy. But it may still be right to suggest that some sign ought to be given within the framework of the set liturgy of the *hic et nunc* action of the Spirit.

Now that the custom of extemporizing the eucharistic prayer has disappeared, the only place in the great liturgies of East and West which seems to leave room for extemporization, apart from the sermon, which is of great importance in this respect, is the provision, in the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, for all the sacred ministers to offer prayer *ad lib.* at the Great Entrance of the Holy Gifts. We do not know how far this opportunity is generally taken advantage of in the life of the Orthodox Church, though we have heard it used. Some Anglican liturgically reformed parishes have a prayer meeting at the offertory, which echoes the same practice, and we have ourselves, like others, instituted the occasional practice of holding a prayer meeting instead of the set intercessions after Evensong. These experiments have helped Anglicans to understand what others have seen in free prayer, and why it is a precious gift that must not be let die in the name of liturgy and tradition.

If we use free prayer in this way, we are conscious that we are not adding to our worship some vitally new element which it did not possess at all. The addition of some opportunity for the free and unforced expression of our petitions and thanksgivings to the heavenly Father, in the midst of the solemnities of the liturgy or the Office, does not bring the Holy Spirit into the liturgy for the first time. Our free prayer is a sign of what is always true. None the less, it is an appropriate sign, and one which might be given more often than it is. At the same time, free prayer will benefit from its association with the liturgy. At its best, free prayer always has a restraint and dignity which comes from the Bible, the greatest source of prayer. But it is not always found at its best, and then it may well be in fact, as it often seems to the stranger, more stereotyped and less fresh and sincere than the reverent use of liturgical prayers. Association with the liturgy will give richness and depth to free prayer, as well as inevitably filling the minds of wor-

shippers with phrases that are fitter for the worship of God than the clichés of the Prayer Meeting.

If the role of the Holy Spirit in worship is seen as the glorification of Christ, and the leading of men to share in His human worship of the Father, it will be difficult to divorce the expectation of the Spirit's presence from Christ's eucharistic coming, and that will raise again the question of the relevance, perhaps even the inevitability, of some kind of prayer-book, to express the truth that worship is offered by the local embodiment of the whole Body of Christ, spread out through the world in time and space, and extending beyond this world into heaven itself. It is only when the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the idea of the Church as the Temple or community of the Holy Spirit, has been divorced from the thought of Christ, or of the Church as His Body, that there can arise in the minds of Christians so sharp an opposition between the Spirit and the liturgy as has characterized the worship of the traditions we have been considering. But their witness is to something which is true, and one suspects it will continue to be made, until they are satisfied that the traditional Churches allow that radical freedom to the Spirit, whom they confess in the Creed as the Lord, the giver of life, which they themselves claim for Him.

VI

UNITY IN WORSHIP

Let us love one another, so that with one mind we may acknowledge the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the Trinity consubstantial and undivided.

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, at the singing of the Creed.

WE HAVE COME to the point at which it is possible to offer a fuller and more adequate definition of our original insight that the meaning and essence of worship is to be found in Christ Himself, the Jacob's Ladder upon which passes all spiritual traffic from God to man and from man to God. We can now speak more fully of the essence of worship, as the descent to man of the Father's love in the Word, and the ascent to the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, of the filial response to that love, fulfilled by the Incarnate Word in the humanity which He took, which is also our humanity, so that the response is ours as well as His. This response is necessarily one, just as there is only one Word, for it is the human response of Christ, the sole Head of redeemed humanity, which participates in His response in the Church. Unity in worship therefore belongs to its essence; where unity is lacking worship is distorted, perhaps even destroyed, and in any case culpably unworthy of the love of God. Our quotation from the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, which links human unity in worship, as the precondition of confessing the Trinity, with the unity of the Divine Persons in God, is here only echoing our Lord's teaching, that if our brother has something against us we must leave our gift before the altar and not presume to return until we have been reconciled with him.

If men are to answer the divine call to worship, they must submit to the unifying work of Christ; those who are to become the living stones in the spiritual Temple must allow themselves to be reshaped by grace so that they may fit together in one building reared to the glory of God. They must give up their nationalism, class pride, individualism, and pride of modernity, and be made one with redeemed humanity everywhere and at all times in the common liturgy. If, however, we are thus to be one in worship, we shall have to be united in believing the

same Word, and in making the same response in Christ. Unity in faith is the first requisite of unity in worship. We shall also have to belong to one Church, in which our common membership is mutually acknowledged. We shall have to be agreed in at least the essentials of common worship. If our worship need not be uniform (though it is possible that it has been said too often that unity does not mean uniformity, so that it has become possible to believe that unity really means pleasing ourselves what we do) it must be one in at least those matters which involve the essence of worship. It is evident that from this point of view too we raise the familiar ecumenical questions. They cannot be slurred over with an agreement to tolerate our present ways of worship in a united Church, and the vague hope that they will grow together. We have already seen that our present ways of worship involve differing theologies, and fail to do equal justice to every aspect of what we have come to think is the meaning of worship.

The way to unity in worship cannot lie in the agreement of all parties to give up those insights and practices which cause difficulty to others. In this way we should perhaps arrive at a worship which exhibited, shall we say, an Anglican standard of preaching, a Quaker version of the Eucharist, and a Roman spontaneity of expression! Nor can we really be certain that the way to unity lies in reversing this process, and putting together the traditions at the point where they are strongest. Certainly this is at first sight a far more helpful procedure. It is inherently probable that churches will understand best those aspects in worship on which the spiritual life of their tradition has been founded. A merely external understanding of practices in worship will always mislead. If the notion of contribution can be allowed any place in the ecumenical quest, it must be right for us to encourage one another to contribute our affirmations and not our negations. Even so, we cannot be sure, in a fragmented church, that our insights and inheritances can be taken over as they stand; they may require correction before they can be integrated in the structure of Christian unity.

What then is the true way of recovering our unity in Christ? It is a way which is both theological and practical. If it is agreed that the attempt to work positively together in theological construction on a basis of agreement in the doctrine of Christ, His person and work, is the most hopeful way of dealing with our difficulties, we must set forth upon this way. It is evidently a way in which no one can say in advance that it is only the others who will be brought under judgment. The christological pattern, if we can learn to see it together, will probably

correct us all in one way or another. It will demand of every tradition the sacrifice of prejudice and provincialism, and the willingness to grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

As our eyes are being cleansed by repentance to see the pattern of Christ's work in worship more clearly and fully, we shall be helped not only by theological study, of the kind in which the present book has been an essay, but also by study of one another's ways of worship. Unquestionably this cannot be done only in the lecture hall or in the study. It must be done in church, in actual participation, so far as conscience and church discipline allow, in the worship of other traditions. But our purpose will not simply be to understand another tradition better; it will be to learn, through that, of the fullness of Christ. We must learn to see how Christ is at work in a way of worship which is unfamiliar to us, in order that gradually the full pattern of Christ's activity in worship may emerge before us. When we can all see that pattern together, and agree that we are all seeing the same pattern, we shall have discovered the foundation of our unity in worship. Only when we have thus decided on the elements which are essential to the pattern, can we discover what diversity can be tolerated, and how much uniformity is needed if we are to be in fact one in Christ's response.

Our study enables us to forecast something of the nature of that pattern, for unless it has been in vain, we have seen at least the outlines of what it must be like. We have seen in Christian worship a threefold structure: the downward movement of the Word, the upward movement of man's response, the presence of the Holy Spirit giving life to both. All Christian worship must necessarily embody these three aspects, and indeed it may be said that in some degree every tradition endeavours to do so. We cannot identify these three elements in the pattern on which worship is built exclusively with this or that element in Christian worship as it has been practised by one tradition or another. We cannot say the proclamation of the Word is to be identified with the sermon, or man's response with the Eucharist, or the work of the Holy Spirit with extempore prayer.

But it seems humanly probable that if by the grace of God we ever approach to the fullness of Christian worship in a united Church, the main Sunday liturgy will consist, as it does already in the highest aspirations of most traditions, in the service of word and sacrament, focusing on Bible and Table, and the offering of man's response in the fulfilled response of Christ through His own eucharistic thanksgiving. We shall expect to find agreement in at least the main outlines of the

liturgical structure, possibly on the lines of the imitation by the Church of Christ's actions at the Last Supper in offertory, thanksgiving prayer, fraction and communion. There will probably not be a common liturgy for all, in the sense that the same prayers are said throughout Christendom, for many will want to preserve the sign of the present action of the Holy Spirit in freedom of spontaneous variation. But the prayers will express a theology of the Eucharist which is recognizable and acceptable to all, and which grounds our response in Christ's, and sees the benefit of communion in our incorporation into that response. Finally, the service everywhere will make clear that it is the great corporate liturgy of redeemed humanity in Christ in which we are taking part, and everywhere we shall find the one worship of the whole people of God, the *eucharistia* which man offers in Christ to the Word of the divine Charity.

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